



Title: Cyberstalking: the role of sex in perpetrator behaviour and victim impact

Name: Kristiana Wrixon

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**CYBERSTALKING: THE ROLE OF SEX IN
PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR AND VICTIM IMPACT**

**Kristiana Wrixon
MSc**

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CYBERSTALKING: THE ROLE OF SEX IN PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR AND
VICTIM IMPACT

by

Kristiana Wrixon

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requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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CYBERSTALKING: THE ROLE OF SEX IN PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR AND VICTIM IMPACT

K. WRIXON

ABSTRACT

Research has previously found a higher than expected percentage of male victims in cases of cyberstalking. Furthermore, it has been shown that female cyberstalking victims primarily fear physical harm and male victims primarily fear loss of reputation. This study considers why these differences exist with particular focus on the online behaviour of men and women.

Using two questionnaires this study examines the behaviour of Internet users and the experiences of cyberstalking victims in order to consider whether there is a relationship between the way men and women use technology and the fears they experience if cyberstalked.

It was found that men and women spend equal amounts of time online and that men do not place any more emphasis on their online professional presence than women. However, differences were found between the sexes in regards to some online anti-social behaviours and these findings did relate to the differing behaviours of male and female cyberstalking perpetrators. This study concludes that the differences between primary fears in cyberstalking victims are influenced by the online behaviour of the perpetrator and how individuals use the Internet. However these factors cannot be attributed as the sole reason for differences in cyberstalking fears in men and women.

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Science at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Kristiana Wrixon

Signature:

Date: 28th May 2014

I wish to dedicate this work to Timothy Robert Heapy

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background and introduction to the problem

In Britain 7.1 million households, just under one third of all homes, installed the Internet to their properties between 2006 and 2012 (Office for National Statistics 2012). There are no signs of Internet growth slowing down in the near future, with an increase of one million adults accessing the Internet between 2012 and 2013 (Office for National Statistics 2013b). This translates to 86 per cent of the adult population in Britain now having access to the Internet. Despite this high figure, there remain significant ‘digital divides’ based on differing socio-economic factors. For example only 33 per cent of those aged over seventy-five have used the Internet, compared to 99 per cent of those aged sixteen to twenty-four (Office for National Statistics 2013b).

Whilst there are seemingly limitless benefits to the growth of technology there are also an increasing number of ways in which it can be used to cause harm to others. This is particularly concerning when it is considered that the uptake of the Internet has occurred more quickly than an understanding of how individuals use technology, their motivation for doing so and how online communication affects the relationships between those it connects. The motive of the Internet user is of particular interest when it comes to understanding how and why the Internet is used by individuals to cause hurt to others, or to commit and facilitate crime. When considering the role of the Internet in crime, both the behaviour of the perpetrator and the impact on the victim need to be understood in order to stop offending behaviour and support victims.

The Internet has created new opportunities for offending and therefore necessitated the introduction of new laws to deal with new criminal deviancy. However, the Internet has also been used to facilitate a number of crimes which pre-date the advent of this technology. For example, fraud has existed for hundreds of years and the Internet has simply provided a new modus operandi for offenders. Whether the crime itself is old or new, the investigation of online offences has created a number of new challenges for law enforcement professionals who seek to identify, locate and prosecute offenders.

Stalking is one such behaviour which predates the technological explosion. References to stalking behaviour can be found in writing dating back hundreds of years. In 1866 Louisa May Alcott, best known for writing *Little Women*, wrote the novel *A Long Fatal Love Chase*. The novel tells the story of a woman who is chased across the seas for years by her estranged husband, until he mistakenly kills her whilst trying to murder her new partner. Holding her dead body in his arms, the 'stalker' then kills himself and as he does so he says "Mine first - mine last - mine even in the grave!" (Alcott 1997). As such, people who stalk online, or cyberstalkers, are not exhibiting new behaviours but using the Internet as a new tool to enable them to further contact, trace and/or monitor their victim.

Despite descriptions of stalking behaviour being found in literature for hundreds of years, the use of the term stalking to describe an individual becoming fixated with another only began to be used in the late eighties. Stalking, which has been defined as a "constellation of behaviours in which an individual inflicts upon another repeated unwanted intrusions and communications" (Mullen et al. 1999), was first criminalised in California after a series of high profile cases in the late eighties and early nineties. The most often cited case of this time is that of Rebecca Schaeffer, an American actress who was murdered by an obsessive fan called Robert Bardo. Bardo had been stalking Schaeffer for three years. He had written her a number of letters and previously turned up to her filming set armed with a knife. In 1989 Bardo tracked down Schaeffer's home address through a detective agency, which in turn had obtained the address from the California Department of Motor Vehicles. Bardo then went to Schaeffer's front door and shot her dead. Following the murder, California became the first

legal jurisdiction in the world to introduce a specific law against stalking, although all other American States soon followed.

In the UK, following a series of high profile cases and a campaign involving charities, police and survivors of stalking, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (England and Wales) was passed. The Lord Chancellor described the law as being necessary to “...protect all such victims whatever the source of the harassment—[including] so-called stalking behaviour, racial harassment, or anti-social behaviour by neighbours” (Mackay 1997). The Act was purposefully penned with a wide reaching definition about what constitutes criminal behaviour. The three key points to prove in the Act are; the presence of a course of conduct (pattern of behaviour), that the perpetrator knew or should have known that their behaviour was unwanted and that it caused the victim to experience distress or fear (Protection from Harassment Act 1997). The decision to pen this law in an open way meant that when technology began to be used to further assist stalking behaviour, that too could be dealt with under the Act.

Despite good intentions, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 proved to be ineffective in dealing with cases of stalking and many victims felt let down and exposed to risk. For these reasons a campaign was launched in 2011 with the aim of introducing a specific stalking law in England and Wales. Many of the original campaigners for law reform contributed, as well as new organisations and victims who had come forward since 1997. The campaign was successful and on 25th November 2012 amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act were implemented under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

During the campaign for a new stalking law, the topic of stalking perpetrated via the Internet, or as it is more commonly known cyberstalking, was discussed. Instead of two separate laws, it was decided that one law would be introduced which would deal with stalking perpetrated online and offline. A non-exhaustive list of stalking behaviours is included in the new law and one of the prohibited behaviours listed is “monitoring the use by a person of the Internet,

email or any other form of electronic communication” (Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). Having a single stalking law provides recognition to victims of cyberstalking that being targeted online can cause the same level of fear and distress as offline stalking. It is also important that the law is able to deal with offline and online stalking behaviour, as in many current cases of stalking the crime will consist of both types of behaviour (National Stalking Helpline 2013).

Research into understanding the motivations of cyberstalkers and the experiences of those they target has not developed with the same speed as the problem itself has. Whilst cyberstalking and offline stalking are inextricably linked, little is known about whether offenders are similarly motivated, whether there are specific characteristics of cyberstalkers and whether victimology is the same. There is also relatively little information about what effect cyberstalking has on victims and whether this is comparable to offline stalking.

What research there has been into cyberstalking has found a higher than expected percentage of male victims. In cases of offline stalking, female victims have, in almost all studies, been found to account for 80 – 90 per cent of victims (Spitzburg and Cupach 2010), whereas research into cyberstalking has found male victims to account for between half and one third of victims (Alexy et al. 2005; Finkelhor et al 2000; Finn 2004). More recently a study by the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research found that there were differences in the primary fears of male and female cyberstalking victims (Maple et al. 2011). These findings raise questions about whether there are differences in how men and women use technology to cyberstalk and if so whether this is a contributory reason for the difference in male and female perception of fear. Ascertaining answers to these questions can provide a basis for producing guidance to victim support services, so that they can offer informed support programmes for people who are experiencing and/or recovering from this crime. Insight could also be provided into how and why the Internet is used to offend in cases of cyberstalking. Furthermore guidance can be produced for law enforcement professionals who are seeking information regarding the likely sex of an unknown cyberstalking perpetrator.

There is no universal definition of cyberstalking and often the terms cyberharassment and cyberstalking are used interchangeably. For the purpose of this research the term cyberstalking refers to a course of action in which an individual(s) is fixated or obsessed with another person(s) and attempts to monitor, communicate or cause distress to them using the Internet on at least two occasions. Stalking follows the same definition however the behaviour takes place in an offline setting. Cyberharassment involves an individual(s) causing fear or distress to another person(s) through the medium of the Internet on at least two occasions, however the behaviour is not the result of a fixation or obsession which would be characteristic of cyberstalking.

1.2 Motivation

The role of sex, the biological fact of being male or female, and the role of gender, socially constructed norms associated with being male or female, has long been a topic of interest for criminologists (Haynie 1998; Walklate 2004; Walklate 2012). Both sex and gender have been explored in research into stalking and consideration given to the motivation of offenders and impact on victims based on these factors (Englebrecht and Reyns 2011; Lyndon et al. 2012; Meloy and Boyd 2003; Rees 2010; Sheridan and Lyndon 2012; Spitzberg et al. 2010). However comparatively few papers exist that explores the role of sex or gender in cyberstalking.

The research literature in the field of stalking has found that differences exist between male and female victims and offenders. Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) suggest that the focus of research into stalking and sex should move away from asking whether there are differences between men and women, and focus on understanding why these differences exist.

Cybercrime is an emerging area and assumptions should not be made that existing theories and models which are apparent in the offline world are present in the online world. It is important that theories are tested to discover the similarities/differences between online and

offline versions of the same crime. This study seeks to increase knowledge about the role of sex in cases of cyberstalking.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Stalking

As there is no universal definition of stalking in academia or law, statistics presented regarding stalking prevalence and the experiences of victims must be considered through the lens of the definition used in each paper. The most frequently cited statistics for stalking prevalence come from the 1998 American National Survey of Violence Against Women and Girls, which using a definition requiring a high level of fear found that 8 per cent of women and 2 per cent of men are stalked in their lifetime (Tjaden and Thoennes 1998). However when the same survey used a slightly different definition that required a lower level of fear in victims, lifetime prevalence increased to 12 per cent in women and 4 per cent in men. In Britain crime statistics are most regularly taken from the British Crime Survey. In 2011 participants in the British Crime Survey were asked the following question to determine whether they had been stalked;

Since the age of 16, has ANYONE ever done any of the following things to you? This may have been a partner, a family member, someone you knew casually, or a stranger.

YOU CAN CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER AT THIS QUESTION IF YOU WISH

1. Sent you unwanted letters, emails, text messages or cards that were either obscene or threatening
2. Made a number of obscene, threatening, nuisance or silent phone calls to you
3. Waited or loitered outside your home or workplace
4. Followed you around and watched you
5. Deliberately interfered with or damaged your personal property
6. None of these
7. Don't know/ can't remember

8. Don't wish to answer

(Hall and Smith 2011)

Using this qualification the survey asserted that one in five women and one in ten men had been stalked at some point in their life (Hall and Smith 2011). However it is possible that this somewhat loose definition could take into account other behaviours, such as harassment by debt collectors, or a one off incident that would not fall under most legal or academic definitions of stalking.

The largest gender differences in surveys of victims of stalking are found in definitions which state that the victim must experience *high* levels of fear or credible threats (Lyndon et al. 2012). Age has also been found to be a factor that influences the number of male and female victims found in sample groups. College samples often show smaller differences between male and female victimization rates, whereas the largest sex divide is found in clinical or forensic samples (Spitzburg and Cupach 2010). It is unclear why these differences exist.

Stalking is a crime of persistence and victims can be stalked for years with the average case lasting for fifteen months (Spitzburg and Cupach 2010). There have been conflicting findings as to whether there is a difference in persistence between cases which involve male and female stalking victims. Sheridan (2001) found no significant relationship between sex and the estimated duration of stalking, however Spitzberg and Cupach's (2010) meta-analysis found that men reported longer durations of pursuit behaviours.

Many victims of stalking, despite being targeted for a long time, do not report what is happening to them. The average stalking victim experiences more than one hundred incidents before they make a report to the police (Sheridan 2005). Despite figures showing that 3 per cent of individuals in Britain had experienced stalking in the last year (Smith et al. 2011), in

2010/11 only 120,000 cases of harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 were officially recorded by the police in England and Wales (Fletcher 2011).

Stalkers are most likely to target someone known to them. The largest category of relationship between victim and stalker is ex partner (Mullen et al. 2008; National Stalking Helpline 2013; Sheridan 2005; Spitzberg and Cupach 2010) and the smallest category is stranger (Mullen et al. 2008; National Stalking Helpline 2013; Sheridan 2005; Spitzberg and Cupach 2010). It has universally been found that women are significantly more likely to be stalked than men with the majority of studies putting the figure of female victimization at 80 – 90 per cent (National Stalking Helpline 2013; Sheridan 2005). Due to high levels of female victimization, stalking is viewed as a gendered crime and grouped with other crimes which disproportionately affect women such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse and so-called honour crimes. Some men have reported that because stalking is viewed as a crime against women, they feel they are taken less seriously than women by friends, family and criminal justice professionals (Rees 2010).

Conflicting arguments have been presented as to whether there is a difference in how male and female stalkers perpetrate the crime. Whilst male and female stalkers largely use equivalent methods to stalk, some studies have found that female and male offenders use these methods with differing frequency. Females have been found to favour telephone calls (Mullen et al. 2008; Meloy and Boyd, 2003) and sending letters (Meloy and Boyd, 2003) whilst male offenders follow their target more often than women do (Mullen et al 2008). Additionally male stalkers have been found to almost universally target female victims, whilst female stalkers are almost equally likely to target someone of the same sex (Meloy 2003; Mullen et al. 2008; Purcell et al. 2009; Sheridan and Lyndon 2012).

Many victims of stalking are concerned about the level of risk posed to them by their stalker. This could be the risk of physical harm but also of the behaviour persisting, or if it has ceased, of it reoccurring. Violence has been estimated to occur in between 30 – 40 per cent

of stalking cases (Mullen et al. 1999; Roberts 2005; Rosenfield and Harmon 2002; Spitzberg and Cupach 2007). The sex of stalkers has been shown to have no impact on the prevalence of threats, assault (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Mullen and Pathé 1997; Mullen et al., 2008; Schwartz-Watts and Morgan 1998; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) or recidivism (McEwan et al. 2007). It has been suggested that the relationship between the victim and stalker is a more significant predictor of violence than sex (Bjorkland et al. 2010). Stalking perpetrated by relational stalkers (those who have a current or previous relationship with the victim) have a high risk of escalation to violence with 76 per cent of femicides perpetrated by ex-partners found to have been preceded by stalking (McFarlane 1999). Whilst risk of harm has not been found to be dependent on the stalker's sex, male and female victims of stalking report finding male perpetrators more threatening than females (Spitzberg et al. 2010). Women are also almost four times more likely than men to feel threatened by obsessive pursuit (Campbell 2003) and thirteen times more likely than men to report being "very afraid" (Davis et al. 2002).

Stalking has been found to cause a number of psychological and physical health problems including digestive disorders, headaches, weight fluctuations and tiredness (Mullen and Pathé 1997). Psychopathology levels in samples of stalking victims are comparable with rates found in samples of psychiatric outpatients (Blaauw et al. 2002). However contradictory findings exist about whether men and women experience different levels of psychological, physical, social and financial consequences as a result of their ordeal. Davis et al. (2002) found similar levels of negative health consequences with both sexes reporting greater likelihood of developing a chronic disease since the stalking began, as well as the development of a reliance on tranquilizers or recreational drugs. However Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) found that women report more psychological and physical consequences of stalking than men, although there was no difference regarding negative social or economic consequences. Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) considered whether victim fear impacted the aforementioned findings regarding psychological consequences and found that once victim fear was considered, neither sex nor prior relationship between victim and offender significantly influenced psychological consequences.

Social losses that have been identified through studies of stalking victims include changing jobs, moving home, staying indoors, changing phone numbers or email addresses and changing routine (Sheridan 2001; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Mullen et al. 2008). Economic losses are also reported. Some of these, such as moving home or job, are linked to social consequences however others are connected to trying to bring an end to the stalking. For example seeking professional legal advice, civil injunctions, defending vexatious legal allegations and improving home security all incur significant costs for victims. In many countries where access to healthcare is not free then the physical health consequences discussed above can also have financial implications. As with much research into sex and stalking, there are conflicting findings as to whether there is a difference between sex and the social and economic consequences of stalking. Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) found no relationship, however Budd and Mattinson (2000) reported that women were more likely to restrict outings, avoid certain places or people, and take additional security measures.

As well as differences between the two sexes in perpetrator behaviour and victim impact research suggests there is a difference between what men and women identify as stalking behaviour. Victims of crime have been found to be more likely to acknowledge their experience as a crime if it follows a classic “script”, often made up of stereotypical behaviours (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007). Men are more likely to acknowledge the experience as stalking if it involves physical attack (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007; Lambert et al. 2013), cyberstalking in addition to offline stalking, and being spied upon (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007). For women if the stalking involves the perpetrator breaking into their home or car, cyberstalking, being spied upon and unwanted phone calls they were more likely to acknowledge the behaviour as stalking (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007).

Stalking is a crime in many countries however even in a relatively small country such as the UK three different laws exist within the three different legal jurisdictions to deal with the behaviour. Scotland introduced a specific law in 2010 and Northern Ireland still uses a similar version to England and Wales’ Harassment Act called the Protection from

Harassment Order (Northern Ireland) 1997. There is very little consistency in intranational stalking laws, let alone international ones and many countries do not have anti stalking laws. Even in countries with laws against stalking, many victims of stalking, whether male or female, report struggling to get the police, and more widely the criminal justice system, to take their cases seriously, to understand risk and to intervene or prosecute effectively (Galeazzi et al. 2009).

2.2 Cyber stalking and technology as an enabler

Research into cyberstalking is in its relative infancy when compared to offline stalking. Many of the larger studies into cyberstalking involve college samples, which as mentioned previously may introduce a bias due to higher percentages of male offline stalking victims being found in samples of young adults. Studies to date have found that between 3 – 33 per cent of people have experienced cyberharassment or cyberstalking (Alexy et al. 2005; Bocij 2002; Finkelhor et al 2000; Finn 2004; Fisher et al. 2000; Spitzberg and Hoobler 2002; Strawhun et al 2013). The large difference in prevalence could be due to the fact that different definitions of cyberstalking are used in each study. A universal definition of cyberstalking for use in academic research would be beneficial and help to standardise findings.

One of the most fundamental questions concerning cyberstalking, and one on which there is yet to be consensus, is whether cyberstalking is solely a product of the Internet (Pittaro 2007; Bocij 2002; Bocij and McFarlane 2003; Basu and Jones 2007) or an evolution of offline stalking (Spitzberg and Hoobler 2002; Sheridan and Grant 2007; Haron et al 2010). Pittaro (2007) asserts that cyberstalkers are “bred on the Internet” and are an entirely new and unique kind of offender, whereas Sheridan and Grant (2007) assert that the Internet is simply another “weapon in the stalker’s arsenal”. The question of whether the Internet breeds new criminal behaviour or facilitates offline crime is debated not just in stalking and cyberstalking but other serious crime such as child abuse, fraud and terrorism. Ellison and

Akdeniz (1998) write that “while the Internet tends to produce extreme versions of problems, it rarely produces new ones”.

Whilst there are differing opinions regarding whether cyberstalking is unique or an extension and evolution of other stalking behaviours, there is common agreement that cyberstalking (and more widely cybercrime) involves new methods of offending and presents new challenges for victims and investigators. Differences that have been studied include the ease of inter-jurisdiction offending (Bernat and Godlove 2012; Chik 2008), higher level of fear caused to victims by perpetrator anonymity (Maple and Lang 2012; Basu and Jones 2007), public nature of comments online (Ogilvie 2000), and increased opportunity for interpersonal contact (Spence-Diehl 2003; Spitzberg and Hoobler 2002). Disinhibition caused by perceived anonymity has also been of considerable concern to researchers (Ogilvie 2000; Maple and Lang 2012). The role of anonymity in increasing a person’s propensity to offend has been researched for decades in an offline context. A seminal piece of research in this field was Zimbardo’s 1969 experiment during which he asked participants, some of whom had their appearance and identity hidden, to administer electric shocks to each other. Zimbardo found that those who acted anonymously behaved in a far more aggressive manner.

It has also been suggested that online behaviour can be harder to investigate and prosecute than offline behaviour (Pittaro 2007). Burmester et al. (2005) state that

Stalking on the Internet leaves an entirely different trail of evidence for investigators that threatens to confound efforts to protect victims. The highly volatile and easily corrupted digital evidence that is often essential for the prosecution, presents new challenges to law makers and forensic experts.

Basu and Jones (2007) assert that there is significant evidence that individuals do think of the Internet as a place and that as such they feel that they should have the same level of protection to their privacy and “property” (e.g. email addresses and websites) as they would

in the offline world. If cyberspace is viewed as a place separate to the physical world then this raises questions about who is responsible for regulating this area and whether the community who uses cyberspace should be responsible for enforcing its own rules and regulations. Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the Internet, recently called for a 'Magna Carta' bill of rights to be written by the Internet community, "It's time for us to make a big communal decision...are we going to set up something like the Magna Carta for the World Wide Web and say, actually now it's so important, so much part of our lives, that it becomes on a level with human rights." (BBC 2014). Suggestions have also been made that Internet service providers (ISPs) should bare more responsibility in protecting users (Tavani and Grodzinsky 2002; Wall 2008).

A commonly cited case in the research literature on the topic of regulation of the online space is that of Amy Boyer and Liam Youens (Spitzberg and Hoobler 2002; Tavani and Grodzinsky 2002). Liam Youens was obsessed with Amy Boyer, a girl he went to high school with. He had not seen Amy for a number of years after high school but used the Internet to request her personal information including place of work, address and date of birth. He later used these details to find her and murder her. In the two years leading up to the murder Youens' had created and maintained a website on which he put details of how he cyberstalked Amy and the exact details of his plan to murder her. Tavani and Grodzinsky (2002) discuss to what extent the ISP and the Internet users who read Youens' site had the moral or legal obligation to report what was happening. The idea that ISP's should bare more responsibility for assisting in cases such as this is also something which cyberstalking victims agree with; 29 per cent of cyberstalking victims state that ISPs should provide assistance to help stop harassment (Maple et al. 2011).

Previous research has highlighted significant differences in the victimology of online and offline stalking cases. Reno (1999) found that 50 per cent of cyberstalking victims were targeted by a stranger, a considerably higher statistic than offline stalking where strangers usually account for about 10 per cent of perpetrators (National Stalking Helpline 2013). However Sheridan and Grant's (2007) research comparing cyberstalking to offline stalking

found that the number of unknown stalkers was evenly distributed across all four victim groups; pure online stalking, offline to online, online to offline and purely offline. A possible explanation for increased numbers of unknown stalkers online is that the disinhibition and anonymity created by the online world causes people to act in ways online that they would not consider doing in an offline environment (Chik 2008, Bocij and McFarlane 2003; Pittaro 2011). However there is no empirical research which would support the assertion that these factors motivate an otherwise law abiding individual to cyberstalk.

Another significant finding in cyberstalking research is that the percentage of male victims of cyberstalking is higher than found in offline stalking. Alexy et al (2005) found more male victims of cyberstalking than female victims. The same study found that in cases of offline stalking there was a higher percentage of female victims. D'Ovidio and Doyle (2003) looked at a sample of aggravated harassment cases reported to the New York Police's Computer Crime Unit and found that 35 per cent of victims were male, 52 per cent female and the remaining percentage comprised of groups. Finkelhor et al (2000) considered juvenile experiences of cyberstalking and found that 51 per cent of victims were male. Maple et al. (2011) found that one third of victims were male. As stalking research has found that the lowest female:male ratio exists in college samples and the highest in forensic samples, it is important to note that those studies in which male victims accounted for approximately 50 per cent of victims were conducted in a college or school setting. However higher than expected percentages of male victimization have been found in self-selected samples of victims and police reports, this indicates that even without this variable more men are reporting experiencing cyberstalking than report experiencing offline stalking.

Whilst Sheridan and Grant's 2007 research into comparisons between online and offline cyberstalking did not find a higher percentage of male victims than female, the highest percentage of male victims were found in the group who had only been targeted online. The authors suggest that female stalkers may be particularly drawn to online stalking because of the lack of need for physical confrontation. Tests for statistical significance for this theory almost reached significance at the $p < 0.05$ level and the authors therefore suggest this

hypothesis warrants further examination, although to date no further research on this subject has taken place.

Strawhun et al. (2013) conducted a study of 248 American psychology undergraduate students, of which 64 per cent were women and 35 per cent were men. 20.5 per cent of respondents said that they had been a victim of cyberstalking, however 26.5 per cent admitted to perpetrating cyberstalking. More women than men admitted to perpetrating cyberstalking behaviour, although no difference between the sexes was found in victimisation rates. However it is worth noting that the definition of cyberstalking used in this study stated that the participant could have experienced behaviour rarely, creating a loose definition that could have lead to a higher number of positive responses to experiencing cyberstalking.

Researchers have considered whether there is a link between time spent online and the likelihood of experiencing cyberstalking behaviour (Spitzberg and Hoobler 2002; Strawhun 2013). Strawhun et al. (2013) found that those who spent more time on general Internet forums such as Twitter and Facebook were more likely to encounter problems with other individuals and perpetrate some form of abuse.

Sheridan and Grant (2007) found that overall there are more similarities between offline and online stalking than there are differences. In both online and offline stalking those who target ex intimates are the most populous type, even though the percentage is slightly lower online than would be expected offline (Sheridan 2007; Alexy 2005). The effect of the crime on the victim has been found to be very similar with anxiety, depression, insomnia and post-traumatic stress disorder present in victims of cyberstalking (Maple et al. 2011; Sheridan and Grant 2007; Alexy et al 2005; Haron and Yusof 2010).

One of the most comprehensive studies into the impact of cyberstalking on victims was conducted by Maple et al. in 2011. This survey of 353 cyberstalking victims demonstrated

the extent of psychological, social and economic consequences on cyberstalking victims. 93.7 per cent of males and 85.8 per cent of females reported a change in their relationships, work or finances. Males were more likely than females to experience changes to their work lives. This is unsurprising considering that men were twice as likely to be stalked by someone from their workplace and more likely than women to report being harassed via work email. 70 per cent of men reported a financial impact compared with 55 per cent of women, however greater numbers of women reported changing social activities or the breakdown of relationships with family and friends. In total 68.9 per cent of respondents reported at least one symptom of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and one third of respondents reported all symptoms of PTSD. Higher levels of PTSD existed in those who had been stalked both on and offline. The most extreme stalking behaviour, as well as the most physically dangerous stalkers have been found in cases in which the stalking begins online and later crosses over to offline harassment (Sheridan and Grant 2007).

Men and women were asked to select their primary fear during their cyberstalking experience (Maple et al. 2011). The most common primary fear for men was loss of reputation whereas women primarily feared physical assault, with almost twice as many women as men selecting this option. The most frequently selected stalker behaviour that caused fear in both men and women was the compilation of information online in order to harass or threaten.

Like stalking, cyberstalking is an underreported crime; only 12.4 per cent reported seeking help from the police (Maple et al. 2011). Reasons that have previously been given for not reporting cyberstalking include; not thinking it was serious enough, not being sure if the incident was criminal and thinking the police would not view it as a serious offense (Fisher et al. 2002).

2.3 Internet usage

In 1998, the first full year that the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was enforceable, only 9 per cent of Great Britain's households had access to the Internet. Ten years later this figure had grown by over 600 per cent and by the end of 2012 85 per cent of Great Britain's households had used the Internet in the last three months (Office National Statistics 2012). During this period of time reports of cyberstalking increased as did the media's interest in the subject.

Whilst there is still a difference in the percentage of British men and women who use the Internet (87 per cent of men and 83 per cent of women), the number of male and females doing so is almost equal at 21.9 million men and 21.7 million women (Office of National Statistics 2013a). This parity between the sexes is similarly found in other western countries including Croatia (Horvat et al, 2011) and America (Losh 2009). Losh (2009) found that American digital divides by sex were diminishing over time, and by 2006 there was rough equality between the sexes in regards to computer ownership, Internet access, approximate time spent online and using the Internet as a primary news source. However there remain significant digital divides based on factors such as age, education and ethnicity.

When considering British statistics regarding male and female access to the Internet it is important to also consider the age of the individual. In Table One it can be seen that there is very little difference between the percentage of men and women who have access to the Internet until the age of sixty-five. This indicates that age is a more significant factor than sex, in regards to using the Internet. Netburn (2012) writes that the youth currently have a "hyper-connectivity", meaning that they are always connected to the Internet for information or social contact.

Table One: Internet users by age group (years) and sex

	Age						
	16 – 24	25 – 34	35 - 44	45-54	55 – 64	65 - 74	75+
Male %	98.9	98.3	96.9	92.6	84.9	70.4	38.8
Female %	99.0	98.7	97.0	91.8	83.5	60.9	24.8

Source: Office for National Statistics 2012

Jackson (1998) writes that “people use the Internet because it satisfies their motives, is associated with positive effect, and because the cognitive requirements for use are compatible with their existing cognitive repertoire”. Whilst the numbers of male and females accessing the Internet are similar this does not mean that their motives or existing cognitive repertoire are the same and this could impact on how men and women communicate and behave online.

Studies of male and female communication offline have found that “men communicate to establish superior social standing, while women communicate with the undertone of rapport, compassion, and empathy” (Gefen and Ridings 2005). Gefen and Ridings (2005) examination of male and female communication on Internet forums found that these offline communication differences transferred to online written communication.

As well as differences in how they interact, differences have also been found in what men and women do online. Women are more likely to use the Internet to communicate (Singh, 2001; Jackson et al. 2001), as a tool to assist work (Singh 2001; Horvat et al, 2011; Buchmuller et al., 2011) and to care for others (Buchmuller et al. 2011). Men however use the Internet to search for information (Jackson et al. 2001) and for entertainment purposes (Horvat et al, 2011; Buchmuller et al, 2011). Despite these differences in behaviour no difference has been found between the trust men and women have in the Internet or their concerns about privacy (Horvat et al, 2011; Jackson et al. 2001). However it is important to

consider that that some of these studies are over ten years old and access to the Internet has grown considerably in this time, which could mean that these findings are invalidated.

A more recent study of 40,699 English users of the Internet site Wikipedia provides an example on a microcosm level of the differences between male and female online behaviour (Collier and Bear 2012). Wikipedia is a site which allows users to create and edit information pages about anything they wish to, from famous people to scientific formulas. Female readership on Wikipedia was found to be 44 per cent however women only represented 15 per cent of contributors (Collier and Bear 2012). When respondents were asked why they chose not to contribute there were significant differences between the responses from males and females. Women were 26 per cent more likely than men to select “I got into conflict with other Wikipedia contributors” as a reason for not contributing and 43 per cent of women said they did not contribute because they did not feel they had the expertise to.

The Internet is not only a useful tool for those seeking entertainment, knowledge and communication but is also used as a tool by many criminals. The UK Cybercrime Report found that during 2008 over 3.6 million criminal acts were committed online (Fafinski and Minassian 2009). The report estimated that in 2008, 8 per cent of adults (two million people) who used the Internet were victims of email harassment. However the definition of email harassment that was used in the study was the “receipt of an email that amounts to a course of harassment or was personally offensive”. This definition could include persistent legitimate emails and spam as well as emails which may form part of a course of conduct of cyberstalking. It is therefore likely that the incidence of cyberstalking in the UK is lower than this figure.

Consideration has been given as to what motivates online offenders of crime. Holt and Bossler (2009) explored whether lifestyle-routine activities theory (LRAT), which has been applied to some areas of offline crime for over forty years, may be able to explain the increasingly reports of cyberharassment. LRAT suggests that victimization is most likely to

occur when individuals are placed in high risk situations, are in close proximity to motivated offenders, appear to be attractive targets to criminals, and lack a capable guardian (Cohen and Felson 1979; Miethe and Meier 1994). The authors looked at the relationship between risk of victimisation and time spent interacting with others online and an individual's knowledge of computers. The authors argue that similarities found between offline and online crimes in other research means that it is possible that findings in offline harassment may be applied to virtual environments.

Holt and Bossler (2009) hypothesised that owning and regularly updating anti-virus and anti-spyware software may reduce the likelihood of victimization as these programmes could act as a 'capable guardian' in the online world. However no relationship was found between the use of protective software and victimisation. Most of the respondent's general computer use and activities, including shopping, playing video games, or checking email, did not have a significant impact on victimisation. However for both sexes the number of hours an individual spent in chatrooms, instant messaging and their involvement in computer deviance had a significant impact on their risk of victimisation. Mustaine and Tewksbury (1998) also found that regular use of chatrooms and online communication was associated with increased risk of victimisation. They conclude that it is the context of the online behaviour, rather than going online itself that increases risk of victimisation. In an offline context this would be equivalent to saying it is not leaving the house that increases the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime but what an individual does when they do leave the house. This confirms that computer crime and cyber victimisation mirror some relationships to real-world offending (Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998; Holt and Bossler 2009).

2.4 Sex and fear of crime/help seeking behaviour

Fear of crime has been researched extensively, including the role that sex plays in the perception of fear. Women have been found to be more likely than men to experience interpersonal violence such as domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault; however men are

more likely to be victims of assault, robbery and theft. Despite this it has consistently been found that women report much higher levels of fear of crime than men do (Baumer, 1978; Ferraro, 1996; Warr, 1984). Haynie (1998) considered whether male and female fear of perceptions of crime had changed significantly over a twenty year period. She found that the gap between sexes narrowed but there remained a significant difference between men and women regarding whether they were fearful of becoming a victim of crime. There currently exists little research into why differences exist between fear of becoming a victim of crime in men and women. It has been suggested that males may be reluctant to display fear due to social expectations and that it is necessary to "...locate men's relationship to fear within the broader social context of masculine values" (Walklate 2004).

Whilst fear of crime differs between sexes, both men and women have been found to under-report their experiences should they become a victim of crime (Davies, Block, & Campbell, 2007; Kaukinen, 2002; McCart and Smith, 2010). Help-seeking after a crime may be formal or informal. Informal methods, such as support from friends and family, have been found to be more popular than formal systems such as reporting to the police (Dutton et al. 2000; Naved et al. 2006).

Some studies have found that women are more likely than men to report crimes to the police (Catalano, 2006; Kaukinen, 2002). However research also indicates that crime reporting is influenced more by the kind of crime that women are victims of rather than their sex. It has been found that if the offender is someone known to the victim than they are much less likely to report to the police than if they were targeted by a stranger (Gartner & Macmillan, 1995; Jensen & Karpos, 1993; Kaukinen, 2002; Resnick et al., 2000).

Differences have also been found between the numbers of men and women who seek support from their friends and family, with 41 per cent of male victims and 64 per cent of female victims seeking support this way (Geleazzi et al 2009). Research has shown that women seek support from third sector and statutory agencies (excluding police) more than men (Kaukinen

2002). Therefore studies of stalking where samples are gained solely from support services or solely from the police may not be accurate reflections of the problem in the wider community.

Female crime victims are more likely than male victims to seek support from a mental health professional (Kaukinen 2004; New & Berliner 2000), although relatively few victims of crime, between 12 – 16 per cent, seek help from mental health professionals following a violent event (Norris et al. 1990; Prospero and Vohra-Gupta, 2008). Regarding stalking specifically Kuehner et al. (2012) found that 20 per cent of male and 28.1 per cent of females sought help from mental health professionals. Common emotional barriers to seeking mental health services that have been identified as present in men and women experiencing different kinds of trauma include shame, embarrassment, and the stigma associated with being identified as having a mental illness (Bacchus et al. 2003; Jaycox et al., 2004; Koenen et al. 2003; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2008; Rodriguez et al. 2009).

A study considering whether men's lower fear of crime translates to the fear they have regarding their partner's risk of crime found that men have disproportionately more concern for female partners than women do for male partners (Drakulich and Rose 2013). Men with male partners appear to have levels of personal fear similar to men in different-sex relationships, but fear for their male partners at levels similar to those women who have male partners (Drakulich and Rose 2013). This indicates that gendered social perceptions of masculinity and vulnerability are likely to influence perceptions of fear. It has also been suggested that the "shadow of sexual assault" (Drakulich and Rose 2013), or sexual assault being seen as a "master offence" may influence perceptions of fear amongst women.

In regards to stalking, Kuehner et al (2011) found that 10 per cent of male and 22.1 per cent of female victims had reported to the police. Fear also plays a very significant role in male and female acknowledgement of stalking. Studies which define stalking as involving fear

and credible threats have the largest differences in victimisation rates between males and females (Lyndon et al. 2012).

Bass (2007) found that fear in stalking cases is caused by characteristics of the victim and of the stalking behaviour. Women are twice as likely as men to state that they were 'very frightened' of their stalker, 60.1 per cent compared to 30.1 per cent (Sheridan and Lyndon 2012). Women were also more likely than men to be very frightened of an ex-intimate stalker than an acquaintance or stranger stalker (Sheridan and Lyndon 2012).

Male and female victims of stalking have been identified as requiring assistance with a number of different issues relating to their case, including obtaining restraining orders, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, face to face counselling and information about the criminal justice system (Spence-Diehl and Potocky-Tripodi 2001). It is not known however whether these needs change depending on the sex of the victim and whether the way victims would like to access support would differ depending on their sex.

Whilst there is limited research about the role of fear and help-seeking in cyberstalking, differences have been found between who men and women seek help from. Men are more likely than women to contact the administrators of chat rooms and Internet Service Providers to report cyberstalking however there was no difference between the sexes regarding whether a victim had made a report to the police (Maple et al. 2011).

Whilst there is a growing body of research about the role technology plays in help seeking for people with health concerns, there is limited research in to the role that technology plays in help seeking for victims of crime. Studies looking at the role of the Internet in seeking help for health related problems found that females were 90 per cent more likely than men to use the Internet to access health information, although no sex difference was found between those seeking information online about a third party (Ybarra and Suman 2006). The same study found that 55 per cent of people who sought information online contacted a health

professional because of the information they found there. This shows a strong link between self-help behaviours leading to professional help seeking.

2.5 Summary

There has been extensive research in to stalking and there is a growing body of work exploring the nature of cyberstalking and the experiences of those it affects. Whilst interest in cyberstalking continues to grow, it is clear that knowledge and understanding of this crime has not yet reached the level of offline stalking. There are a number of aspects of cyberstalking that are repeatedly discussed in existing research that would benefit from further in depth exploration. These include the role of disinhibition in cyberstalking, how to regulate the Internet, behaviour used by cyberstalkers, the experiences and victimology of those who are cyberstalked and the motivation of cyberstalkers.

When investigating cyberstalking it is important to consider the nature of the Internet, its role in the lives of those who use it and the unique challenges it presents to investigators. Existing research in to the topic does not often locate cyberstalking in this wider context, which means that findings can only tell us what is happening, not why. Asking the questions of why and how cyberstalking victims are targeted online could lead to better intervention strategies and more help for victims.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

This research explores the role of sex, being male or female, in cases of cyberstalking. This is a broad topic area and there are a number of intersecting hypotheses that are explored in this paper.

1. It is hypothesised that there will be no difference between male and female Internet users in terms of how often they access the Internet and the amount of time they spend using it. However it is anticipated that there will be differences between men and women in regards to the frequency that they engage in some of the activities that they take part in online, as well as how they interact with others. It is unclear what these differences will be. A range of online activities will be explored and respondents will be asked questions about how frequently they engage in tasks that have an educational, entertaining, professional and personal purpose.
2. Due to previous research finding that male cyberstalking victims primarily fear loss of reputation, it is expected that male Internet users will place more emphasis than women on the importance of having a positive online professional presence. To consider this hypothesis, respondents will be asked about whether they have an online professional presence and if they think that the people they engage with professionally research them online before, during or after meeting them.

3. Should differences be found in the online behaviour of male and female Internet users then this study will explore whether those differences are mirrored in the behaviour that is perpetrated by male and female cyberstalkers. It is hypothesised that links between offending and non-offending Internet behaviour will be found. For example, should women be found to more frequently use instant messenger, it would follow that female cyberstalkers are more likely to perpetrate the crime through this medium.
4. It is hypothesised that there will be differences between male and female cyberstalking victims in terms of who they seek support from and what types of support they would like to receive. Consideration will be given to formal sources of support such as the police and medical professionals, as well as informal support from friends and family. In regards to types of support, it is hypothesised that women will be more likely to want emotional support and help ensuring their personal safety.
5. Research has previously found that women are more fearful of crime in general and that male and female victims of stalking find male offenders more threatening. Due to this it is hypothesised that the type of help that cyberstalking victims would like to receive (e.g. emotional support or protection) will be linked to whether they are male or female and whether they are being stalked by a male or female. It is hypothesised that those stalked by men would like more help protecting their personal safety. Exploration of this hypothesis will look at all four victim/offender combinations, i.e. male victim/female offender, male victim/male offender, female victim/male offender, female victim/female offender.

3.2 Choice of methodology

The aim of this study is to contribute to an understanding of why differences have been found in the primary fears of male and female cyberstalking victims and why a larger than expected number of male victims have been found in existing research. Obtaining this information requires the input of individuals who have experienced cyberstalking and, more widely, information about those who use the Internet.

Information was gathered through two questionnaires which largely contained quantitative questions. Further information was also gathered through a request to the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research, for access to data from the Electronic Communication Harassment Observation (ECHO) pilot study, which was carried out by the group in 2011 (Maple et al).

The strengths of a questionnaire method, and the primary reason that this methodology was chosen, is that it allows for a large number of participants to respond and a significant amount of data to be analysed. A questionnaire also allows for responses from a larger geographical scope than could be achieved through focus groups or interviews. However weaknesses of this approach include that it is not possible to probe the respondents' answers and individual experiences cannot be explored in depth.

Survey One was designed to gain an understanding of how often men and women use the Internet, what they do online, how they perceive the Internet and whether they had ever engaged in behaviour which may be considered anti-social, such as sending insulting messages. The survey included questions concerning the respondent's online activities in both a personal and a professional capacity. Since the aim of this questionnaire was to understand how the Internet is used by men and women; the

sample was taken from a group of Internet users rather than a group of people who experienced cyberstalking.

Survey Two was designed after analysis of the results of the first survey and was distributed specifically to victims of cyberstalking. This survey included questions about the respondent's sex and the sex of their cyberstalker, the kind of behaviour that was targeted at them, the support they would have liked to have received and whether they accessed help through formal or informal channels. Although the ECHO data explored some of these questions, respondent's in the ECHO survey were not asked the sex of their cyberstalker which limited the conclusions that could be drawn from that work to further the aims of this study.

3.3 Survey One – Internet Users

The first survey that was conducted as part of this study contained thirty-two questions exploring Internet use and Internet behaviour (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey). The questionnaire was administered by an online market research company called Marketest. The questionnaire was self-administered online to Marketest's panel of users who are signed up to their website. 450 private individuals aged over sixteen years old and living in the UK completed the questionnaire in December 2012.

Respondents were asked about their experiences of engaging in anti-social online behavior, such as posting another person's personal details without their knowledge. This survey sought to understand male and female online behaviour rather than cyberstalking behaviour, therefore the word cyberstalking was not used in the questionnaire. Findings from this survey are used to consider whether the online behaviour of men and women can explain the differences that emerge in the primary fears of male and female cyberstalking victims.

3.3.1 Tools for the analysis of the data

The findings were collated by Marketest in a Microsoft Excel Office spreadsheet. Data was then interrogated using IBM SPSS Statistics 19. Relationships between sex and online behaviour were examined using a Chi-Square test. A measure of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine statistical significance.

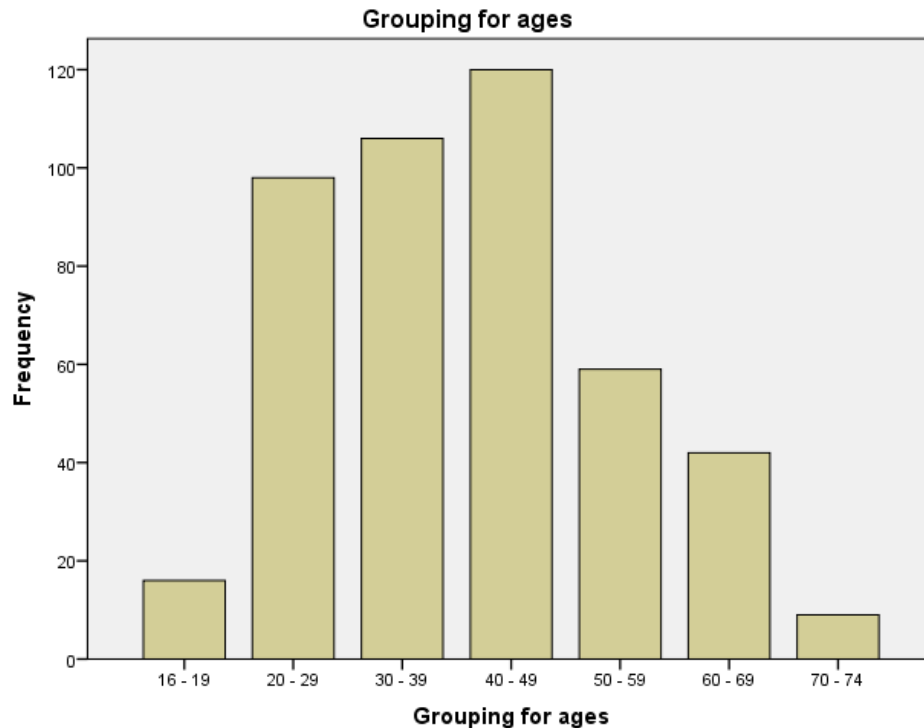
3.3.2 Analysis of population

The respondents were taken from Marketest's panel and are therefore a random representation of Marketest's panel group rather than a random sample of all Internet users.

Panel members who complete Marketest's questionnaires are entered in to a draw to receive gift vouchers. This means there is the potential for financial gain should the respondent complete the questionnaire which may influence their decision to be involved in the research.

A total of 450 individuals responded to this questionnaire, all respondents live in the United Kingdom. 194 (43.1 per cent) of the respondents were male and 256 (56.9 per cent) were female. The mean age of participants is 40.44 and range is sixty-two.

Table Two The age of respondents in Survey One



3.4 Second Survey – Experiences of cyberstalking victims

A second survey was conducted to examine whether links could be found between the behaviour experienced by victims of cyberstalking and the online behaviour identified in Survey One. Initially consideration was given to obtaining this information from the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research's ECHO study (Maple et al 2011), however that data did not contain information about the sex of the cyberstalker, so it would not have been possible to use the information to examine all the hypotheses that this paper proposes to consider.

Survey Two contained eleven questions. A copy of the survey can be seen in Appendix Two. This survey focused on three main themes;

- The online medium through which the victim was contacted by the perpetrator
- The support that the victim would have liked to have received
- Whether the victim sought help from formal or informal channels during the cyberstalking experience and if not, what reasons they had for not doing so.

This survey was made available through the online questionnaire tool Survey Monkey. A link to the questionnaire was distributed through social media channels. The survey was open for responses between November 2013 and February 2014. The definition of cyberstalking used in the questionnaire was the same as that used in the ECHO research (Maple et al. 2011) so that comparisons between the data could be made. The definition used was as follows;

Cyberstalking is a course of action that involves more than one incident perpetrated through or utilising electronic means (such as the Internet or mobile technology) that causes distress, fear or alarm." Have you experienced cyberstalking which meets this definition?

The definition of cyberstalking used for collecting data focused on the behaviour that the victim was experiencing rather than the motivation of the offender and therefore no reference to obsession or fixation was made. This was because the victim may not feel qualified, or have the knowledge to make a judgement on the motivation of the perpetrator.

The link to the survey was distributed through a number of online channels. A description of the research, its purpose and a link to the questionnaire was placed on the website of the National Stalking Helpline, a charity project managed by Suzy Lamplugh Trust. The National Stalking Helpline website (www.stalkinghelpline.org) has over 35,000 hits a year. The majority of these hits are from Internet protocol (IP) addresses registered in the United Kingdom however the website also receives hits from America, Australia, Canada, France and India amongst others.

The link was also distributed through the social media profiles of the National Stalking Helpline and the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research. Approaches were made to victim support charities to advertise the survey on their websites and social media channels. Organisations that were approached included stalking-specific charities as well as domestic abuse support services and Victim Support, the UK's largest charity supporting victims and witnesses. None of these organisations listed the research on their website, however many did retweet the link that was published through the National Stalking Helpline's Twitter account.

Whilst both male and female responses were desired in order to be able to make comparisons, the description did not specifically highlight that the questionnaire focused on sex breakdowns in order to prevent the survey being heavily promoted by a group that specifically supported men or women.

3.4.1 Tools for the analysis of the data

Respondents' answers were input into IBM SPSS Statistics 19 and Microsoft Office Excel. Frequency measures were used to analyse the findings and percentages were taken from these figures. As there were only seventy-four respondents it was not possible to draw statistical significance from this data regarding differences between the sexes.

3.4.2 Analysis of the population

Seventy-four individuals completed the questionnaire, a further twelve individuals started the questionnaire but did not complete it and their data was therefore unable to be used. A further twenty-three people did not qualify to complete the questionnaire as their experience of cyberstalking did not meet the definition provided.

This was a self-selected population of victims of cyberstalking. The link to the questionnaire was shared by a number of organisations which support women who have experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse. Comparably few groups which solely support men shared the link. The link was seen on the National Stalking Helpline Facebook page by a female blogger and this individual shared the link with a large network of female bloggers. It is therefore possible that more women than men saw the link to the questionnaire. It is not possible to say that the respondents in this survey are random and data should be considered with these facts in mind.

3.5 National Centre for Cyberstalking Research (NCCR) Electronic Communication Harassment Online (ECHO) survey

The ECHO survey was written with input from technical advisors, researchers and experts from Network for Surviving Stalking and had the aim of capturing “...demographic information, online behaviour and people’s experiences of cyberstalking” (Maple et al. 2011).

The survey was hosted on the website of the British charity Network for Surviving stalking between September 2010 and March 2011. During this time 353 self-selected individuals responded to the survey. When the data was analysed to produce the report frequencies were measured but the data was not interrogated for statistical significance. For the purposes of this study specific information was requested from the researchers. The following request was made via email;

Would you be able to send me the data from the ECHO pilot which covers:

- 1) cyberstalking behaviours reported by victims*
- 2) primary fear*
- 3) to whom victim had reported the incident (ISP, Police etc)*

At a later point in time the gender of the perpetrator was also requested; it was at this time that it was realised that this was not one of the questions covered in the ECHO survey.

3.5.1 Tools for the analysis of the data

Data was supplied in a Microsoft Excel Office format and was input onto IBM SPSS Statistics 19 where relationships between categories were examined using a Chi Square test. A measure of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine statistical significance.

3.5.2 Analysis of the population

The respondents of this survey are self-selected and self identify as victims of cyberstalking. Of the total number of respondents, 68.8 per cent were female and 31.2 per cent male. The age of participants ranged from fourteen years old to seventy-four. Almost a third of respondents were aged thirty – thirty-nine. The median age was thirty-five, with males having a median age of thirty-eight and females with a median age of thirty-four.

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

4.1 Results from Survey One

Men and women were asked to select three words from a list that they felt best described the Internet. This list contained both negatively and positively associated words, however the top five selected words for both sexes were all positive (see Table Three).

Table Three: The top five words selected to describe the Internet selected by men and women.

	% of Men	% of Women
1	Helpful (67 %)	Helpful (65.4%)
2	Informative (58.8 %)	Informative (56.7%)
3	Entertainment (23.7%)	Accessible (26.6%)
4	Educational (21.6%)	Entertainment (21.5%)
5	Efficient (20.1%)	Essential (20%)

The most frequently selected negative word for both males and females was ‘addictive’ however twice the number of women selected this word (16.5 per cent of women compared to 8 per cent of men). Only 2 per cent of women and 2.1 per cent of men selected the word ‘dangerous’.

98 per cent of respondents connected to the Internet at least two – five times a day, the remaining 2 per cent connect to the Internet at least once every three days. Respondents were asked how much time they spent online in an average day

including work and social activities. 15 per cent of Internet users spent more than ten hours a day online and a further 52 per cent spent more than four hours a day on the Internet. No relationship was found between sex and age that the Internet was first accessed, how often the Internet is accessed or how many hours a day are spent online. 1 per cent of respondents first accessed the Internet before they were five years old and 30 per cent first accessed the Internet before they turned eighteen.

Respondents were asked if they would be inconvenienced should they not be able to access the Internet for the day. 95 per cent said that would at least be minimally inconvenienced should they not be able to access the Internet for a day and 45 per cent said they would be 'entirely' or 'significantly' inconvenienced. When asked if they would be inconvenienced if they were unable to access the Internet for a week, only 2 per cent said that they would not be inconvenienced at all.

No relationship was found between sex and using the Internet to send/receive emails, make telephone calls, use message-boards, interact on social networking sites, reconnect with friends, research for school or work and browse for information. There were however statistically significant differences between how men and women used the Internet in regards to some online activities. Men used the Internet more often to play massive multi player online role playing games (MMORPG), watch and download videos, listen to music, use online economic services and gamble. Women used the Internet more often than men to participate in chatrooms, read blogs (although no difference in writing blogs), maintain a personal website and participate in online dating.

More men than women said that they talked to people online that they did not know in the offline world. When asked in what setting individuals communicated with strangers online, more than half of men and women responded that they did so on social networking sites and forums.

Respondents were asked if they had ever been part of an online community. An online community was defined as being a group of people that has formed because of a common interest passion or concern. 48 per cent of respondents said that they had been part of an online community and of those 66 per cent felt it had given them something which could not be provided in the offline world. When asked why they joined an online community (more than one answer could be selected) the two most popular reasons were to find specialist information (57 per cent) and to speak to a person who has experienced a similar situation to themselves (59 per cent). A further 1 in 5 people who joined online communities said that they did so because they felt lonely.

62 per cent of male respondents and 55.7 per cent of female respondents who were employed said that they needed to access the Internet as part of their job for tasks including sending emails, conferencing and searching online. The number of men who need the Internet was found to be slightly higher but the difference was not statistically significant. Respondents who did need to use the Internet for work were asked whether they considered themselves to have an online professional presence. This was defined as meaning that “the Internet influences how you are viewed by colleagues, clients or potential clients, or that it is important to your professional success.” 24 per cent of men and 22.9 per cent of women considered themselves to have a professional presence. Respondents were asked how important they considered this presence to be. All respondents stated that they considered it to be at least fairly important but more women than men said it was very important. 50 per cent of women who consider themselves to have an online professional presence stated that they think people they interact with professionally ‘always’ perform a search engine check on them before, during or after interaction, compared to only 6.9 per cent of men.

Respondents were asked whether they had ever engaged in online behaviour which may be considered anti-social. The purpose of this questionnaire was to examine the

behaviour of Internet users and not to ascertain whether they had perpetrated cyberstalking. It is therefore intentional that it is not possible to derive from these questions whether respondents were committing criminal acts or whether their actions had caused alarm, distress or fear to another person. Statistical significance could be measured regarding whether different sexes had engaged in certain anti-social behaviours, however respondents were also asked to provide their primary reason for doing so and what relationship they had with the individual they were directing their actions towards. Findings regarding the two latter questions did not reach statistical significance and frequency measures were used to examine the data.

No difference was found between sex and whether an Internet user had ever posted another person's personal details online without their consent or had been untruthful about themselves online. Of those who had been untruthful about themselves online, the top reason given by women was to protect their personal details (34.5 per cent) whilst for men this reason was joint first with 20.5 per cent saying it was to protect personal details and 20.5 per cent saying that it was in order to make them seem better.

Of those respondents who put a person's contact details or picture online without their consent over half, 55.5 per cent of the men and 50 per cent of the women who did so, had put the details of a friend online. The second most selected relationship for men was an ex girlfriend/boyfriend, whilst for women it was a stranger. Men primarily said that they did so because it was funny but women most often selected 'other' as their reason for doing so. The 'other' reasons given included "it was only a picture", "as part of an animal rights campaign, to enable people to write to them with their objections", "to share their contact details". Of the men who posted details online without the person's consent, just over half did so about another male. Almost two thirds of the women who posted details online did so towards another female and the remainder did not know the sex of the person whose details they put online.

Statistical significance was narrowly missed ($p=0.053$) regarding whether respondents' had ever sent an insulting message to another person, with more men than women saying that they had done so. Differences were found between males and females regarding some online anti social behaviours. More female Internet users have previously knowingly written something false about another person online and more male Internet users have sent an anonymous message. More men have also sent a message containing a threat to damage a person's property, or a threat to cause them harm.

Of those who had written something they knew to be false about another person online more women did so about an acquaintance whereas men were more likely to do so against an ex partner. The joint top two reasons provided by men were that they did so because they thought it was funny and that they did not know why they did it. However the top reason given by women was revenge. Four of the five men who wrote something false about another online did so towards another male. Of the seventeen women who wrote something false about another online, just over half did so about another female.

Of those who had sent an anonymous message online, men were more likely to send a message to a stranger whilst women were more likely to do so to a friend. The top reason given for both sexes for doing so was because they thought that it was funny. For women the two joint second reasons for doing so were because they were bored and because they wanted to rekindle a relationship. For men the second most selected reason was that they were bored. Exactly half of the anonymous messages sent by men were to other men, in a further 18 per cent of cases the male respondent did not know the sex of the person that he was sending an anonymous message to, in the remainder of the cases the message was sent to a female. In seven of the cases where women sent anonymous messages they did so to other women, this represents just under half of the cases, in the remainder of the incidents the messages were sent to a male.

Of those who sent an insulting message online, men most often did so to a stranger whereas women most often did so to a friend. Both sexes most frequently selected the reason for doing this as 'revenge' with 38.5 per cent of men and 35 per cent of women giving this as their reason. A further 11.5 per cent of men and 10 per cent of women said that their main motivation was 'to scare' the recipient. In 32 per cent of cases men sent insulting comments to women, in 24 per cent of cases the sex of the recipient was unknown and in 44 per cent of cases men sent messages to other men. For women 40 per cent sent messages to another woman, 45 per cent sent messages to a man and 15 per cent did not know the gender of the person they sent the messages to.

Threatening someone's physical wellbeing or personal property was the least common of the anti-social behaviours, no women said that they had ever done so and only four men said that they had sent a message of this nature. Of those men who did send something threatening, two directed the message at a family member and one to an ex partner (the other to a friend). The reason given by one male was revenge but the other three said that they did so because they were bored. On three occasions these messages were directed at a female. It is possible however that more individuals had engaged in this and/or other forms of anti-social behaviour, but chose not to admit that they had done so.

4.2 Results from Survey Two

16.2 per cent of respondents were male (n=12) and 83.8 per cent (n=62) were female. 63.5 per cent (n=47) of victims were cyberstalked by a male, 27 per cent (n=20) by a female and 9.5 per cent (n=7) of respondents did not know the sex of the person cyberstalking them.

Further breakdown of the sex of the victim and offender was examined to consider the quartet of sex combinations as shown in Table Eight.

Table Four: Sex of victim cross tabulated with sex of offender in Survey Two

		Offender Sex		
		Male	Female	Unknown
Victim Sex	Male	9.5%	5.4%	1.4%
	Female	54.1%	21.6%	8.1%

As can be seen in Table Four, 9.5 per cent of the total respondents were men cyberstalked by another male. However when looking at only male respondents it can be seen that 58.3 per cent of men were cyberstalked by another male, 33.3 per cent were cyberstalked by a female and the remainder did not know the identity of the person cyberstalking them. 64.5 per cent of female victims were cyberstalked by a male, 25.8 per cent by a female and 9.7 per cent did not know the sex of the cyberstalker.

When the data was classified by the relationship between offender and victim, the largest category was ex-intimate with 27 per cent (n=20) of all respondents saying that they had a previous intimate relationship with the person cyberstalking them. The second most common grouping in this survey was stranger with 25.7 per cent (n=19) of respondents listing this answer.

Table Five: What relationship is the cyberstalker to the victim in Survey Two?

		Frequency	Percent
Relationship between victim and offender	Stranger	19	25.7
	Ex intimate	20	27
	Acquaintance	5	6.8
	Colleague	1	1.4
	Ex colleague	1	1.4
	Family member	2	2.7
	Neighbour	4	5.4
	Unknown	3	4.1
	Other	19	25.7

Table Six: Victim sex cross tabulated with relationship

		% of male and female victims	
		Male	Female
Relationship between victim and offender	Ex intimate	25%	27.4%
	Stranger	25%	25.8%
	Neighbour	8.3%	4.8%
	Acquaintance	16.7%	4.8%
	Colleague	0	1.6%
	Ex Colleague	0	1.6%
	Family Member	0	3.2%
	Unknown	0	4.8%
	Other	25%	25.8%

A quarter of both men and women selected ‘other’ as the relationship between them and their cyberstalker. For women the other was most likely to be the new partner of

a current or ex partner of theirs. In regards to men, one listed the relationship as being the ex-partner of a girlfriend and the remaining two said the offenders were more than one person. It is unclear whether this is a primary offender who recruited third parties or a group, such as a couple or an organisation.

Table Seven: Behaviours present in cyberstalking and victim sex

		Percentage of cases in which behaviour was present		
		All respondents	Male victim	Female victim
Cyberstalking behaviours	IM	41.9%	25%	45.2%
	Email sent to personal account	47.3%	50%	46.8%
	Email to work account	21.6%	33.3%	19.4%
	Social Networking Sites	82.4%	75%	83.9%
	Offline	32.4%	41.7%	30.6%
	Third party contact	66.2%	83.3%	62.9%
	Write untrue things about the victim online	52.7%	66.6%	50%
	Did the stalker post private things online?	28.4%	41.7%	25.8%
	Create a website about you	13.5%	25%	11.3%
	Encourage others to contact you	21.6%	25%	21%
	Made threats to harm you	37.8%	50%	29.7%
	Other behaviour not listed here	35.1%	25%	37.1%

Table Eight: Behaviours present in cyberstalking and offender sex

		Percentage of cases in which behaviour is present based on offender sex		
		Male offender	Female offender	Offender gender unknown
Cyberstalking behaviour	IM	46.8%	25%	57.1%
	Email personal account	51.1%	45%	28.6%
	Email to work account	23.4%	25%	0
	Social Networking Sites	83%	85%	71.4%
	Offline	31.9%	40%	14.3%
	Third Party contact	61.7%	85%	42.9%
	Wrote untrue things on the Internet	48.9%	65%	42.9%
	Did the stalker post private details online?	25.5%	35%	28.6%
	Create a website	12.8%	20%	0
	Encourage others to contact you	23.4%	15%	28.6%
	Made threats to harm you	53.2%	15%	0
	Other behaviour	42.6%	15%	42.9%

From these two tables we can see that there are notable differences between the percentage of male and female cyberstalking victims who experience certain behaviours, although the ranking of the behaviours is very similar. The top three behaviours experienced by both men and women are third party contact, contact through social networking sites and having untrue statements written about them online, however a higher percentage of men than women experience these behaviours.

Respondents were asked what kind of help they would have liked to have received during their cyberstalking experience. When looking at the total number of respondents the most popular kind of help wanted by victims was emotional support (68.9 per cent) followed by help gathering evidence (62.2 per cent) and advocacy with law enforcement professionals (55.4 per cent). However when broken down by sex there is a difference between men and women regarding these categories. 74.2 per cent of women wanted emotional support compared to 41.7 per cent of men and 66.6 per cent of men wanted advocacy assistance with police compared with 53.2 per cent of women. Other categories in which there was marked differences between sexes include changing phone numbers/email addresses which 27.4 per cent of women wanted help with but no men did. 11.3 per cent of women wanted assistance with a refuge service but again no men listed this as a form of support they wanted access to.

As well as considering the kind of help victims would like based on their sex, consideration was given as to what kind of help cyberstalking victims would like based on the sex of their stalker. Those who were stalked by a male most often wanted help with emotional support (76.6 per cent) followed closely by evidence gathering (61.7 per cent), advocacy with law enforcement (59.6 per cent) and advocacy with Internet service providers (57.4 per cent). Those who were stalked by a female most often wanted assistance with gathering evidence (60 per cent), emotional support (55 per cent), advocacy with law enforcement (45 per cent) and

advocacy with Internet services providers (40 per cent). When help wanted was broken down by offender sex, refuge services and changing phone or email numbers did have positive figures in both male and female categories, which they did not when looking solely at victim sex. This shows that women want to access these services whether they are stalked by a male or female. However if they were stalked by a male they were twice as likely to want help in each of these categories.

Respondents were asked who they sought support from during their cyberstalking experience. Victims most often sought support from friends and family with 91.6 per cent of men and 82.8 per cent of women seeking help in this way. 41.7 per cent of men and 35.5 per cent of women sought help from a general practitioner (GP) or other medical professional. 41.7 per cent of men and 43.5 per cent of women sought help from a legal professional and 66.6 per cent of men and 59.7 per cent of women sought help from the police.

If respondents chose not to seek help through each of the channels they were asked to select their primary reason for not doing so. It was only possible to select one answer in this question.

Table Nine: If respondent did not seek support from friends and family, why was this?

		Frequency with which male and female victims gave each reason		
		Frequency	Male victim	Female victim
Reason given for not seeking help through friends and family.	I felt embarrassed	3	-	3
	I thought that they would judge me	2	-	2
	I felt it was my fault	1	-	1
	I didn't want to worry them	3	1	2
	Other	1	-	1

Table Ten: If respondent did not seek support from a medical professional then why was this?

		Percentage of male and female victims who gave each reason			
		Frequency	Total percentage	Male victim	Female victim
Reason given for not seeking help through medical professional	I didn't think they would be able to do anything to help	13	28.3%	50%	25%
	My health (emotional or physical) wasn't affected	7	15.2%	0	17.5%
	I felt embarrassed	11	23.4%	33.3%	22.5%
	I thought that they would judge me	2	4.3%	0	5%
	I prefer to deal with things on my own	8	17.4%	0	20%
	Other	5	10.9%	16.7%	10%

Table Eleven: If respondent did not seek support from a legal professional then why was this?

		Percentage of male and female victims who gave each reason			
		Frequency	Percentage	Male victim	Female victim
Reason given for not seeking help from a legal professional	I was worried about repercussions	7	17.1%	-	20%
	It was too expensive	5	12.2%	16.7%	11.4%
	I didn't know this was an option	5	12.2%	-	14.3%
	I didn't think they would be able to help me	9	22%	66.7%	14.3%
	I was embarrassed	3	7.3%	-	8.6%
	I prefer to deal with things in my own way	3	7.3%	-	8.6%
	Other	9	22%	16.7%	22.9%

Table Twelve: If respondent did not seek support from the police then why was this?

		Percentage of male and female victims who gave each reason			
		Total Frequency	Total Percentage	Male victim Frequency	Female victim Frequency
Reason given for not seeking support	I was worried about repercussions	4	14.3%	1	3
	I didn't know this was an option	4	14.3%	-	4
	I didn't think they would be able to help me	7	25%	1	6
	I was embarrassed	3	10.7%	-	3
	I thought that they would judge me	2	7.1%	-	2
	Other	8	28.6%	1	7

Table Thirteen: If respondent did report to the police then why was this?

		Percentage of male and female victims who gave each reason			
		Frequency	Percentage	Male victim	Female victim
Reason given for making a report to the police	I was scared of physical harm to me	8	17.8%	-	8
	I was scared of physical harm to my loved ones	4	8.9%	2	2
	I was feeling distressed by the stalkers actions	16	35.6%	2	14
	I was worried they would cause distress to loved ones	2	4.4%	-	2
	The cyberstalker threatened to make malicious allegations against me	4	8.9%	-	4
	I was worried about financial loss	2	4.4%	1	1
	Other	9	20%	3	6

4.3 Results from ECHO data

There was no statistically significant difference between men and women in regards to seeking help to stop the cyberstalking by reporting to an authority and contacting forum administrators. No difference was found between sexes and trying to stop the cyberstalking by allowing a third party to intervene, responding to the cyberstalker, not responding to the cyberstalker, contacting mobile phone providers and leaving social networking sites. However more women than men changed their email address and more men contacted their Internet Service Provider for help. There was almost statistical significance ($p=0.052$) in changing mobile phone numbers with women being more likely to do so than men.

No statistical significance was found between sex and the behaviours experienced by victims of cyberstalking. The ECHO pilot specifically asked about contact via mobile phone, social networking sites, webmail, work email, text message, physical approaches, instant messaging and other. However the behaviours of text message and 'other' barely missed statistical significance, both at $p=0.086$ with more female victims reporting being targeted via text message and more men reporting 'other' behaviours.

59.2 per cent of respondents reported experiencing contact via social networking sites, 52.1 per cent by webmail, 45 per cent by text message, 39.4 per cent via mobile phone, 31.2 per cent had physical approaches, 25.8 per cent were contacted through instant messaging and 20.4 per cent via their work email accounts.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Hypothesis One

This hypothesis is accepted. The frequency with which respondents access the Internet and the large range of activities that the Internet is used for demonstrates the important role the Internet plays in the lives of those who use it. These findings also demonstrate that the higher than expected percentage of male victims found in previous cyberstalking research cannot be attributed to men accessing the Internet more frequently, or men spending more time online than women.

The range of online activities that are engaged in by Internet users and the amount of time individuals spend on the Internet indicates that for those who are cyberstalked the intrusion in to their lives is significant. It is unrealistic to expect that someone targeted online would be able to remove themselves from the Internet without there being a significant impact on their social, financial, professional and personal lives.

Previous research has found that women are more likely than men to use the Internet to communicate (2001; Jackson et al. 2001) and men to search for information (Jackson et al. 2001) however no similar findings were discovered in this study. The Internet has evolved at great speed and is a very dynamic piece of technology with constant innovation fuelling change. It is therefore unsurprising that findings from this study do not support conclusions from research in to online activity dated as recently as ten years ago.

This does not mean however that there is no difference in the online behaviour between men and women or in how men and women view the Internet. Men's third most selected word to describe the Internet was 'entertainment' and this is reflected in the fact that men were found to be significantly more likely than women to use the Internet for the purposes of listening to music, watching videos, gambling and

playing massive multi player online role playing games (MMORPG). That men engage in these activities more could be linked to why there is a higher than expected percentage of male victims in cyberstalking. It may be that men are more likely to engage with strangers whilst socialising on entertainment sites and findings from Survey Two showed that strangers accounted for the second highest category of relationship between offender and victim.

The Internet provides many users with unique opportunities that do not exist or would be exceptionally hard to find in an offline environment. This is demonstrated by the percentage of respondents who felt that participation in an online community gave them something that they could not get in the offline world. The reasons given for joining online communities demonstrate that the Internet plays an important role in facilitating the provision of emotional support. If individuals are providing emotional support to each other online, then an interpersonal relationship is being built and this could lead to one individual becoming fixated or obsessed with another, as it would in the offline world. When individuals interact online it may also be more difficult for a potential cyberstalking victim to pick up on social cues that in the offline world would cause them to feel uncomfortable and end a new friendship.

A significant number of Internet users talked to people online that they do not know in the offline world. The most common place for this to happen was on social networking sites, this was also found to be one of the most common mediums through which victims experienced cyberstalking. Further consideration could be given as to whether those who talk to strangers on social networking sites are at higher risk of experiencing cyberstalking than those who do not.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis was found to be null. There was no difference between males and females in terms of those who considered themselves to have an online professional presence.

Another reason that was considered regarding why men fear loss of reputation more than women was that a man's professional reputation could be more often targeted by an offender when they are cyberstalked. In Survey One women were found to be more likely than men to write something untrue about another person online and 41.7 per cent of male cyberstalking victims reported being stalked by a female. This is considerably higher than the percentage of female victims who are cyberstalked by a female.

When the behaviours experienced by male and female cyberstalking victims were analysed, a higher percentage of men (66.6 per cent) than women (50 per cent) said that their cyberstalker wrote untrue things about them online. A higher percentage of men also stated that their cyberstalker had contacted a third party. Whilst it is unclear what the cyberstalker communicated with the third party about, it is possible that this was done to discredit the victim. When considering the behaviour of cyberstalkers cross examined with sex, more female offenders (65 per cent) wrote untrue things online about their victims than did male offenders (48.9 per cent).

All of these factors could provide reason as to why men are more likely than women to fear loss of reputation. It is also possible that for men, a threat to their reputation acts as a trigger which leads them to acknowledge their experience as cyberstalking. Research has previously found that men and women are more likely to report stalking when their experience follows a certain 'script' (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007). It is possible that for men part of this script is a threat to their reputation.

4.4.3 Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis is accepted. There were strong links between the offending behaviour of cyberstalkers, as described in Survey Two, and anti-social behaviour engaged in online as disclosed in Survey One. In Survey One more men had made a threat to harm another person or their property and in Survey Two it was reported that 53.2 per cent of male offenders had made threats as part of their cyberstalking behaviour, compared to 15 per cent of female offenders. This is contrary to previous research in to offline stalking which found that the sex of the stalker had no impact on the prevalence of threats or assault. Further connections were found between the two surveys. More female Internet users disclosed they had written something online that they knew to be false about another person and the study of cyberstalking victims found that 65 per cent of female cyberstalkers had written untrue things online compared with 48.9 per cent of male offenders.

As men were found to be more likely to send anonymous messages this could mean that men value the anonymity aspect of the Internet more than women and utilise this to their advantage should they engage in criminal behaviour. That women were more likely to write something untrue about another person online could indicate they have more of an understanding about the permanency of online comments and the effect this can have on another person.

Findings from this study indicate that behaviour that takes place in a non offending setting could be linked to the behaviour displayed when engaged in cyberstalking behaviour. Considering this it could be suggested that men, who were more likely than women to send anonymous messages online, are more likely to cyberstalk anonymously than women.

Consideration was also given as to whether male and female cyberstalking victims were more likely to be targeted via the mediums that they prefer to engage in online.

This would mean that female victims would be more likely to experience cyberstalking through chat rooms and online dating websites and men would be targeted more often through MMORPG's and gambling sites.

In the ECHO research statistical significance of $p < 0.05$ was not reached in any of the behaviours experienced by victims based on their sex. However more women than men reported experiencing mobile phone calls and texts messages and more men reported contact through work email and instant messaging. In regards to Survey Two carried out as part of this research project, differences in frequency of behaviours were found but due to the sample size it was not possible to say whether these were statistically significant. The largest differences between the behaviour experienced by male and female victims were found in instant messaging, email to work accounts, third party contact, posting private things online and writing untrue things online (see Table Eleven). Apart from the first two listed methods of contact the remaining behaviours are things that could be done through a number of mediums and further questions should be asked about where the untrue things are written, and how third parties are contacted in order to establish whether a victim's behaviour online is linked to how they are targeted.

Interestingly, considering female stalking victims have been found to be more fearful than male victims (Campbell 2003; Davis et al. 2002), a higher percentage of male victims reported experiencing offline approaches and threats of harm. However when looking at these behaviours based on offender sex, men were more likely than women to make threats to harm, 53.2 per cent of male offenders compared to 15 per cent of female offenders. There was a much smaller difference between the sexes regarding making offline approaches with 40 percent of women engaging in this behaviour compared to 31.9 per cent of men. This indicates that it could be threats rather than a physical presence which causes a higher level of fear. This raises questions regarding to what extent characteristics of the victim and characteristics of the offender result in fear of physical harm.

It has previously been suggested that female stalkers may be particularly drawn to online stalking because of the lack of need for physical confrontation (Sheridan and Grant 2007), however a notable number of female offenders (four in ten) made offline approaches to their victim. This demonstrates that female cyberstalkers are not solely restricted to distance behaviours.

4.4.4 Hypothesis Four

This hypothesis was accepted. Differences were found between who men and women sought support from and what kind of support they wanted when they experienced cyberstalking.

More men than women sought help from their friends and family, a medical professional and the police; however more women sought help from a legal professional. Previous research into stalking found that cyberstalking was one of the behaviours that indicated seriousness to men (Englebrecht and Reyns 2007). This could mean that men who are cyberstalked are much more likely to report what is happening to them to the police than if they were stalked in an offline capacity.

In regards to seeking help from a legal practitioner, a number of women said they did not do so because they feared repercussions, however no men provided this as a reason for not seeking this form of help. The repercussions these women fear could be physical, which would support the finding that women primarily fear physical harm. However as women were less worried about repercussions in regards to reporting to the police, it could be that the repercussions they fear when seeking help from a legal practitioner, are related to concerns about difficulty being caused in contact arrangements regarding shared children, or fear of the perpetrator pursuing a vexatious legal complaint in response to civil legal advice being sought by the victim.

Research has previously found that victims are more likely to make a report to the police if the offender is a stranger (Gartner & Macmillan, 1995; Jensen & Karpos, 1993; Kaukinen, 2002; Resnick et al., 2000). This study found that victims were more likely to report to police if they were targeted by an ex intimate than if they were stalked by a stranger.

4.4.5 Hypothesis Five

This hypothesis was accepted. Help seeking was found to be more likely to occur when a victim is targeted by someone of the same sex as them.

In all categories men were more likely to seek help when cyberstalked by another male. A higher percentage of women sought help from friends and family when they were cyberstalked by a female than by a male and all women who were cyberstalked by an unknown person sought support from friends and family. In regards to seeking help from a medical professional, women were almost equally as likely to seek help through this channel if they were cyberstalked by a male or female and least likely to do so if they were cyberstalked by someone whose identity was unknown. In regards to support from legal services and the police, findings echoed that of seeking help from friends and family.

Considering that when men and women are targeted by someone of the opposite sex it is most likely to be an ex partner, it is possible that it is the relationship between the offender and victim that has more impact on help seeking behaviour than the sex of the cyberstalker. However it is interesting that both men and women are more likely to seek help when targeted by someone of the same sex. As more cyberstalking victims have been targeted by someone of the same sex than would be expected with offline stalking, this could account for why a higher percentage of reporting has been found in this research when compared to help seeking in offline stalking cases.

4.4.6 Other notable findings

Unlike previous research into cyberstalking which found a higher percentage of male victims of cyberstalking when compared to offline stalking (Alexy et al. 2005, Finkelhor et al. 2000; Maple et al. 2011), findings from Survey Two found that over 80 per cent of victims were female. This figure would more commonly be found in research into offline stalking cases. It is possible that this finding is related to the fact that the population of this study, as with many studies of stalking, gathered data from a self-selected group of victims. This may introduce bias to the findings.

Cyberstalking by an ex intimate was the most populous kind of cyberstalking, which is similarly the case in offline stalking. However, only 27 per cent of cyberstalking victims were targeted by an ex partner compared to 50 per cent in offline stalking cases (Sheridan 2005). The study also found that 25.7 per cent of offenders were strangers to the victim, a similar percentage to the 22 per cent of cases found in the ECHO research (Maple et al. 2011). This is a much larger percentage than would be commonly found in offline stalking, where strangers account for about 10 per cent of cases (National Stalking Helpline 2013; Mullen et al. 2008). This could be due to the fact that many Internet users talk to strangers online, which may mean they come into contact with individuals who go on to become fixated with them and target them through the Internet. In the offline world individuals may be more wary about sharing personal details or establishing relationships with people they have no prior connection with either directly or indirectly (through friends or family). However it is unclear at what point individuals who talk to strangers online stop seeing them as a stranger and start seeing them as a friend or acquaintance. This boundary will be different for different individuals.

Differences in the percentage of ex-partner and stranger offenders in offline and online cases could also be due to the fact that should an individual be cyberstalked by an ex-partner, that person has increased access to and knowledge about the victim's

day to day activities in the physical world. For example they know where the victim works, who their friends are, where they live and this may mean they are more likely to stalk in an offline setting.

Similarly to offline stalking it was found that women were more likely than men to be cyberstalked by someone of the opposite sex, however the difference wasn't as pronounced as it has been found to be in offline stalking. That one quarter of women and three fifths of men were cyberstalked by someone of the same sex suggests that cyberstalking is less of a gendered crime than offline stalking. It is also notable that a large number of respondents in Survey Two were cyberstalked by the ex-partner of a current partner or current partner of an ex-partner. Both of these factors raise questions about whether the motivations of offline and online stalking offenders are different and whether a fixated individual is more likely to stalk or cyberstalk depending on their relationship to the victim.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis has considered the significant problem of cyberstalking. Through a series of questionnaires this study has provided new insight into the role that sex (being male or female) plays in cyberstalking.

This work builds upon previous research which found that male and female cyberstalking victims have different primary fears, with men fearing loss of reputation and women fearing physical harm (Maple et al. 2011). This thesis also explored why a higher than expected percentage of male victims is often found in studies of cyberstalking (Alexy et al. 2005; Finkelhor et al 2000; Finn 2004). Consideration was given as to whether there are differences in how men and women use technology to cyberstalk and whether this could account for differences in male and female perception of fear. The behaviour of men and women online in a non cyberstalking context was also explored in order to consider whether links could be found between sex and online behaviour, which would be able to explain the aforementioned findings.

No difference was found between men and women in terms of how often they accessed the Internet or how much of their time they spent online during an average day. This supports a conclusion that any differences between the ratio of male and female victims in studies of offline and online stalking are not due to male Internet users spending more time online than women.

Some differences were found between the sexes regarding what they do online. As a higher percentage of cyberstalking victims are pursued by a stranger than in offline stalking, it is significant that men were more likely than women to talk to strangers online. This could indicate why more male cyberstalking victims than expected have been found in previous research.

Whilst higher percentages of male victims are found in cyberstalking studies, it is unclear whether this is because more men experience cyberstalking than offline stalking, or whether men are more likely to self-identify as a victim when they are being cyberstalked. As previous research has found that victims of stalking are more fearful when they are being targeted by a man (Spitzberg et al. 2010) and over half of respondents in Survey Two were cyberstalked by another male, this could also be a factor in the rise of percentage of male victims.

Consideration was given as to whether behaviour engaged in online in a non offending setting could be linked to the behaviour that men and women engage in when they cyberstalk. Further thought was given as to whether any differences that are found could account for men being primarily fearful of loss of reputation and women primarily fearing physical harm. It was found that more male Internet users had sent an online message threatening the physical well being or the property of another person and that more men had sent an anonymous message. It was also found that more women had written something false about another person online. If men and women follow similar patterns of behaviour when they use the Internet to cyberstalk, this could account for differences in the fears of male and female cyberstalking victims. This conclusion could provide assistance to those investigating a cyberstalking suspect as it suggests that a perpetrator's online behaviour in a non offending setting will mirror their behaviour when they cyberstalk.

Survey Two found that male cyberstalkers more frequently make threats of harm to their victim and encourage others to contact them. They are also more likely to make

contact through instant messaging and by sending emails to the victim's personal account. Female cyberstalkers more frequently post private details about the victim online, write untrue things about the victim and contact third parties. This suggests that male and female cyberstalkers favour different behaviours. These findings also support the conclusion that how an individual is cyberstalked contributes to what they are fearful of. For example writing something untrue about another person online is likely to make that person fearful of the impact that lie will have on them and their reputation.

Survey One did not find any differences between men and women in regards to how important they feel their online professional presence is to their career success, or how often they need to access the Internet as part of their work. Therefore differences in primary fears between the sexes cannot be attributed to men placing more importance on the role of the Internet in the workplace. This suggests that it is the behaviour of the perpetrator that has more of an impact on victim fear. Another possible explanation is that there are differing primary fears between the sexes because socially constructed gender norms influence how men and women react to being cyberstalked. Further research would be required to explore this possibility.

Male and female victims were asked what kind of assistance they would have liked to have received when they were cyberstalked. No men wanted access to a refuge service or help changing their phone number/email address, however there was no category in which no women wanted help. A higher percentage of women also wanted help with safety planning for themselves. This supports the finding in Maple et al's (2011) research that women primarily fear physical harm. More men wanted help with financial assistance, advocacy with Internet Service Providers and advocacy with law enforcement professionals. In the remaining categories the differences in the percentage of males and females wanting help in that area was small (less than 5 per cent). These findings demonstrate the need for support services to exist for male and female victims of cyberstalking. However, it also indicates that certain support

services would be utilised more by men or women and commissioning of such services would benefit from taking this, as well as the higher number of female victims, in to account.

The most common form of help seeking for men and women was through friends and family. As cyberstalking victims are most likely to disclose to those close to them, it is important that information about cyberstalking, how to recognise it and what steps can be taken to protect victims is made widely available. This would mean that when a victim disclosed to a loved one, that individual is able to direct the victim to appropriate support services and offer helpful advice. For example it is recommended by psychiatrists who specialise in stalking that people who are stalked/cyberstalked do not engage with the perpetrator at all (Pathé 2002). However a well meaning friend or family member may suggest to the victim that they talk to the offender and try to reason with them. If information about cyberstalking was made more widely available this would be less likely to occur and the risk to the victim would be reduced.

Stalking is an underreported crime, however this study found a high number of men and women who experience cyberstalking had sought help from the police. It is unclear why this is, however people that are cyberstalked may be unable to hide what is happening to them from third parties, whereas being stalked in the offline world could be considered easier to conceal. Letters that come to an individual's house, phone calls to a private number and following are all common offline behaviours that would be very obvious to a victim but not necessarily to those around them. Comparatively comments on social networking sites, forums and websites set up in the victim's name could be seen by anyone and are highly likely be seen by anyone listed as a 'friend' on these sites. As cyberstalking is often, although not always, a less private crime it may be that this incentivises the victim to seek help, or they are more likely to receive external pressure from friends and family to do so.

As with previous research into cyberstalking (Maple et al. 2011) this study found a higher percentage of cyberstalking victims were targeted by a stranger than would be expected in offline stalking. This statistic could support previous assertions that cyberstalking is a separate entity to offline stalking (Pittaro 2007; Bocij 2002; Bocij and McFarlane 2003; Basu and Jones 2007), however it would not be possible to draw conclusions on this topic until there was a better understanding of the motivation of these offenders as well as knowledge regarding whether they have a history of offending. This could provide insight into whether it is the nature of the Internet that causes people to offend or whether the Internet just exposes individuals more easily to motivated offenders.

It is clear from the data observed in Survey One that the Internet plays a significant role in the professional, social and recreational lives of those who use it. Therefore a person's activity online cannot be seen as entirely separate from their offline life. This means that when the Internet becomes the scene of a crime, which is effectively what happens in cases of cyberstalking, it should be treated as any other scene of crime and steps taken by law enforcement professionals to collect evidence and prosecute offenders. Like any other victim of crime, those who experience cyberstalking should be provided with tailored support, taking into account factors such as the victim's sex and individual experience.

This study has found a clear link between the sex of an individual and how they use the Internet, the behaviours a cyberstalking victim experiences, the help they would like to receive and the behaviours engaged in by perpetrators. This has furthered existing research in the field and these findings could now support further research into why these differences exist. This will provide a better understanding of the nature of cyberstalking, the motivation of offenders, the effect of the crime on the victim and how to best support each victim of cyberstalking individually.

5.2 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this research paper. The most important to note is that the samples collected in Survey One and Survey Two are not representative and therefore findings from this study can only be used to consider further research and not to draw conclusions. Respondents for Survey One were gathered from the panel of a market research company and Survey Two was advertised primarily through the social media channels of groups that support victims of crime. This is a very limited population from which to gather respondents. This study could have been strengthened by drawing on existing survey research which is representative. An example of such data is the Oxford Internet Survey which is carried out by the Oxford Internet Institute every two years and considers Internet use and attitudes in Britain. This survey could have provided information similar to that which was gathered in Survey One and allowed for a comparison of information which would have strengthened any resulting conclusions.

This study considered why male cyberstalking victims have a primary fear of loss of reputation. In order to explore this hypothesis questions were included in Survey One which asked respondents how important they felt their online presence was to their professional success. However further questions regarding how important individuals felt the Internet was in maintaining their reputation outside of the workplace were not included. This limitation should be considered alongside the conclusions made in this study.

Another limitation to this study is that only quantitative data is analysed. Qualitative data could have added to this work by allowing for respondents' answers to be probed in more depth. Qualitative data also provides scope for individuals to place their own emphasis on what topics or issues are important to them and this can result in a greater level of insight in to the area of work being considered. Specific aspects considered in this study which could have benefitted from a qualitative approach

include; the behaviour of Internet users, the nature of cyberstalking and the reasons why respondents' did or did not seek help. A methodology that included a combination of both types of data was considered, however analysing the significant amount of information that this approach would have yielded was judged too large a task for a study of this size.

This research must also be viewed through the lens of the cyberstalking definition that was used in Survey Two. This study used the same definition as that which had been utilised in the ECHO survey, which this work follows on from, however this definition is different to many other works which consider the problem of cyberstalking. There is not yet a universal definition of cyberstalking either in academia or in law. The definition used in this paper may, in some countries, not amount to an action which is prohibited by law. Equally in other countries it may exceed that which is required to complete the offence of cyberstalking. This means that it is difficult to compare findings in this paper to findings in other papers nationally or internationally.

Differing definitions could also affect whether an individual respondent would consider themselves to have been cyberstalked. Before answering any questions in Survey Two respondents were asked whether their experience matched the definition provided. All seventy-four respondents whose answers were analysed in this study agreed that their experience matched this definition, however a further twenty-three said their experience did not meet this definition and therefore they did not complete the rest of the questionnaire. That a respondent did not agree with the definition does not mean that their experience would not be considered as cyberstalking in another context. Until a universal definition is agreed upon all research in to cyberstalking will be limited by an inability to directly compare findings.

5.3 Future Research Directions

There are a number of areas of research which could be explored as a continuation of this study. It is clear that a study which contains a representative sample is needed in order to fully understand the victimology of those who experience cyberstalking. This research found that over 80 per cent of victims were female however other research has found a female:male breakdown of 70:30, 60:40 and even 50:50. All of these papers take their samples from different cross sections of society. It is also important for a consensus to be reached on the definition of cyberstalking that is to be used when investigating the phenomenon. A study which considers the different legal and academic definitions of cyberstalking and suggests a definition which incorporates the most common aspects of these explanations could be beneficial in bringing more unity to cyberstalking research.

It would be valuable to conduct a questionnaire containing a larger sample of those who engaged in online anti-social behaviours to further explore the motivations for doing so. A number of respondents in Survey One indicated that they engaged in such behaviour because they were bored or because they thought it was funny. Some also said they did not know why they did what they had done what they did. Further understanding of how individuals view their actions online could contribute to understanding about the role that disinhibition and impulsivity play in the actions of Internet users. It would also be interesting to explore why those who said they engaged in certain acts to 'get revenge' decided to use the Internet to achieve that goal. Research on this topic could then be expanded further to consider whether individuals understand the legal framework surrounding engaging in these behaviours online.

It was clear from this research that many cyberstalking victims, especially women, wanted access to emotional support as a result of their experience. Currently there are

no known emotional support programmes for cyberstalking victims in the UK. Further research to explore what kind of programme would be most helpful for cyberstalking victims, as well as if these needs differed between men and women, could provide a solid contribution to this field of research.

Consideration should be given as to whether men view crime that takes place on the Internet as more serious than that which takes place in the offline world. If the latter is the case then exploration of what it is about the Internet, for example its public nature or the permanency of online comments, that causes this perception. If this were found to be true of cyberstalking then it may well also be true regarding other crime that can span the online and offline world.

It was notable from the results of Survey Two that many individuals were cyberstalked by the ex-partner of a current partner or current partner of an ex-partner. Research into this scenario should be considered as it is not an area in which current work has focused on in either an offline or online context.

As a large number of Internet users communicate with strangers online in different settings, from health to gaming websites, consideration should be given as to whether talking to individuals in this setting influences the likelihood of cyberstalking taking place.

Expansion of the findings from this study in regards to looking at gender constructs would also be helpful. This research explored the role of sex however it did not consider whether gendered social constructs of being male or female influenced perception of fear. As this research found that men and women were more likely to report to the police when they were cyberstalked by someone of the same sex, exploration of whether men and women's perception of fear changes depending on the sex of their stalker could also be considered.

Chapter 6

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Chapter 7 Appendices

Appendix A

Survey One

This questionnaire has been developed by a research masters student studying at the University of Bedfordshire under the Institute of Research and Applicable Computing (IRAC). This questionnaire is seeking to build upon earlier studies looking at the digital divide of gender in online presence, security and communication. Analysis of this data will therefore focus on differences or similarities of the respondents answers based on their gender.

We are specifically seeking knowledge around how men and women like to communicate online, what medium they prefer and where they access the Internet most frequently. Further analyses of the age, education level and income bracket of respondents may be looked at as these have also previously been identified as possible causes of differences in online access and communication.

Our focus will be exploring online boundaries (what an individual views as acceptable communication or unacceptable communication) to identify whether there are gendered based differences. We will also consider how males and females prefer to be communicated with online and important the Internet is viewed in a social and professional capacity.

If you have any questions about the purpose of use of this questionnaire please email contact@netetude.co.uk.

Consent form

All answers will be treated confidentially. Answers will be used to inform a Masters by research dissertation looking at the role of gender in online behaviour.

Results will be grouped and therefore you will not be identifiable in any way. Any participant who wishes to receive a copy of the completed paper should send an email to contact@netetude.co.uk. Emails containing such a request will be treated confidentially. If you would like any further information about this study please email the above address.

	Yes	No
A. I confirm I have read and understood the above conditions		
b. I understand that my participation is voluntary and anonymous and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.		
c. I agree to take part in the above study		

If the respondent does not agree the above, the respondent is forwarded to the end of the questionnaire

Frequency of Internet use

1. What age did you first access the Internet?

5 or younger

6 – 12

13 – 17

18 – 25

26 – 40

41 – 55

56 – 70

70+

2. How often do you access the Internet?

(Access meaning connecting to the Internet)

More than 20 connections a day

11 – 20 connections a day

6 - 10 connections a day

2 – 5 connections a day

Once every few days

Weekly

Monthly

Less than monthly

3. On average how many hours a day will you spend on the Internet? (including time spent browsing, looking at news, responding to emails, social networking and any activity relating to work or leisure)

10+

7 – 9

4 – 6

1 – 3

Less than 1

4. How often do you use the Internet for the following?

Check or respond to email	More than 20 times a day 11 – 20 times a day 6 - 10 times a day 2 – 5 times a day Once every few days Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Never
Use instant messaging	
Participate in chat rooms	
Make or receive phone calls via the Internet	
Read a web-log or blog	
Write a web-log or blog	
Maintain a personal website	
Post messages on discussion or message boards	
Posted photos or pictures on the Internet	
Update or create social networking sites	
Search for information (browsing)	
Online dating	
Play MMORPGS	
Play other online games	
Watching and downloading videos	
Listen to music	
Online shopping	

Online economic service	
Reconnecting with previous friends or acquaintances	
Gambling	
Seeking information/support for health concerns	
Researching for work/school	
Other – please specify	

Accessing the Internet

5. How often do you access the Internet from

Location	More than 20 times a day 11 – 20 times a day 6 - 10 times a day 2 – 5 times a day Once every few days Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Never
Home	
Work	
School/place of education	
Library computer	
Internet cafe	
Wi-fi hotspot with own device	

6. On an average day would you be inconvenienced if you could not access the Internet for a whole day?

Entirely

Significantly

Fairly

Minimally

Not at all

7. In an average week would you be inconvenienced if you could not access the Internet for one week?

Entirely

Significantly

Fairly

Minimally

Not at all

8. Pick 3 of these words from the list below that you think best describe the Internet?

Helpful, efficient, sinister, factual, masculine, feminine, informative, stimulating, accessible, confusing, dependable, sexual, illegal, anonymous, entertainment, real, connections, educational, dangerous, safe, unsafe, liberating, vital, essential, over rated, depersonalising, addictive

Logical condition: If the respondent has answered Homemaker (voluntarily), Self employed, Not currently employed, Retired, Student or to question 7, the respondent is forwarded to question 28

9. Do you need to access the Internet as part of your job i.e. answering emails, searching online, online conferencing, etc.

Yes

No

If the respondent does not need to access the Internet as part of their job, the respondent is forwarded to question 15

10. On average how much of your working day do you spend online for work related activities?

1 – 10per cent

11 – 20per cent

21- 30per cent

31 – 40per cent

41 – 50per cent

51 – 60per cent

61 – 70per cent

71 – 80per cent

81 – 90per cent

91 – 100per cent.

11. Would you consider yourself to have an online professional presence?

(Online Professional Presence meaning that the Internet influences how you are viewed by colleagues, clients or potential clients, or that it is important to your professional success.)

Yes

No

Don't know

If the respondent does not consider having an online professional presence, the respondent is forwarded to question 18

12. How important is that online professional presence to the success of your career/work life?

(Online Professional Presence meaning that the Internet influences how you are viewed by colleagues, clients or potential clients, or that it is important to your professional success.)

Very important

Important

Fairly important

Unimportant

Not important at all

13. Do you think people regularly perform a search engine check on you before, during or after interacting with you professionally?

Always

Mostly

Sometimes

Rarely

Not at all

Online Security

14. Do you check the privacy and security settings of a website before becoming a member or registering your details?

Always

Mostly

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

15. Do you use antivirus software on your;
(tick as many as appropriate)

Device	Options – yes, no, don't know, don't use
Home Computer	
Laptop	
Tablet	
Smart Phone	
Work computer	

16. Please indicate how strong you think your passwords to online accounts are

Very strong

Strong

Fairly

Weal

Very weak

Online presence

17. Do you have at least one social network profile? (excluding dating websites or forums relating to a specific reason e.g. politics or health)

Yes

No

If the respondent does not have at least one social network profile, the respondent is forwarded to question 24

18. Which accounts to you have profiles with – please tick as many as appropriate

Facebook	
Twitter	
Linked In	
Bebo	
Google Plus	
My Space	
Moshi Monsters	
Other	

19. How important is your social network profile in maintaining your close relationships? (friends, family or romantic)

Very important

Important

Fairly

Unimportant

Not important at all

20. Have you been part of an ‘online community’. (Online community is defined as being part of a group who have formed because of a common passion, interest or concern).

Yes

No

If ‘no’ panelist is directed to question 29

21. What kind of community was this?

(E.g. health, political, environmental etc)

22. Did you feel your friendships with the people within the community gave you something that could not be provided by those in the offline world?

Yes

No

23. Why did you decide to join an online community?

(Tick all that apply)

You wanted specialist information

You felt lonely

You wanted to speak to people in a similar situation to yourself

You wanted to lend your support to a cause/group of people

You wanted to find a date/relationship

Other, please specify:

24. Have you ever felt that your relationship with someone who had met through an online community was as strong as your closest relationships in the offline world?

Yes

No

25. Have you been untruthful about yourself online? i.e. changing age, gender, location, interests, physical attributes, job etc

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 31

If yes please provide details on the following questions;

26. For what reason were you untruthful?

27. Do you connect or communicate with people online that you have never met in person?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 33

If yes please provide details on the following questions;

28. Please indicate in which of the following type of sites you have had conversations with people you do not know offline.

Social networking	
Forums	
Chat rooms	
Dating websites	
Health websites	
Professional networks	
Gaming sites	
Gambling	
Other – please specify	

29. If you wanted to have a personal in depth conversation member how would you view the following communication methods?

Please mark each as ideal, acceptable, not appropriate.

Email	
Skype or similar	
Instant messaging	
Telephone call	
Text message	
Face to face	

Online communication

30. Have you ever written anything online that you knew to be false about another person?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 36

31. Please provide the following details about each person you contacted;

Relationship	Gender of recipient	Primary reason for message sent*	How many times did you write about them	Where did you write it?

Relationship, options – Ex boyfriend/girlfriend, ex husband/wife/civil partner, Friend, Ex friend, acquaintance, neighbour, colleague/boss, ex colleague, stranger, family member, other – please specify.

Gender – Male, female, unknown, transgender

Primary reasons, options - It was funny, revenge, to scare them, I was bored, I wanted to rekindle a relationship, I don't know, other - please specify.

How many times did you on average write about each individual, options – 1, 2 – 3, 4- 5, 6 – 7, 8- 10, more than 10

Where, options – email to people s/he knew, email to people s/he did not know, dating website, sex website, MSN, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, a blog I wrote, a blog someone else had written, I was angry, I was sad, other – please specify

32. Have you ever sent an anonymous message to a person via the Internet?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 38

If yes please provide the following details

33. Please provide the following details about each person you contacted;

Relationship	Gender of recipient	Primary reason for message sent*	How many times did you write about them	Where did you write it?

34. Have you ever sent an insulting message via the Internet?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 39

If yes please provide the following details

Relationship	Gender of recipient	Primary reason for message sent*	How many times did you write about them	Where did you write it?

35. Have you ever sent a message threatening someone's physical wellbeing or personal property via the Internet?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to question 46

If yes please provide the following details

Relationship	Gender of recipient	Primary reason for message sent*	How many times did you write about them	Where did you write it?

36. Have you ever put a person/s contact details or picture on the Internet without their permission?

Yes

No

If 'no' panelist is directed to the end

If yes please provide the following details

Relationship	Gender of recipient	Primary reason for putting details online?	How many times did post the details?	Where did you write it?

Personal details

37. What is your sexual orientation

Straight

Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Prefer not to say

38. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

GCSE's

AS-levels

A-Levels

Scottish Highers

Advanced Diploma

International Baccalaureate

NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications)

SVQs (Scottish Vocational Qualifications)

BTEC National Diplomas and Certificates

GCEs in applied subjects

Apprenticeship

Undergraduate

Graduate

Post Graduate (Masters Degrees, PHDs))

Other

39. What is your employment status?

Full time (more than 30 hours)

Part time/casual

Homemaker (voluntarily)

Self employed

Not currently employed

Retired

Student

Other

40. Are you in a relationship?

Yes

No

Appendix B

Survey Two

Consent form

All answers will be treated confidentially. Answers will be used to inform a Masters by research dissertation looking at the role of gender (being male or female) in cases of cyberstalking.

Results will be grouped and therefore you will not be identifiable in any way. Any participant who wishes to receive a copy of the completed paper should send an email to kristiana.wrixon@study.beds.ac.uk Emails containing such a request will be treated confidentially. If you would like any further information about this study please email the above address.

Although no distress is anticipated when completing this questionnaire, nonetheless as it relates to past incidents that you may have found upsetting you may choose to fill it in at a time where you have a source of support available. If you find you do experience distress you can contact The [National Stalking Helpline](#) which is open during business hours on 0808 802 0300 alternatively you can email advice@stalkinghelpline.org

You therefore may want to complete this questionnaire with It will therefore be suggested to participants that they complete this questionnaire with a source of support available. The contact details of the National Stalking Helpline and Victim Support will also be provided at the beginning and the end of the questionnaire.

	Yes
A. I confirm I have read and understood the above conditions	
b. I understand that my participation is voluntary and anonymous and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.	
c. I agree to take part in the above study	

Cyberstalking Definition

Cyberstalking is a course of action that involves more than one incident perpetrated through or utilising electronic means, that causes distress, fear or alarm.

Questionnaire

1. What is your sex?
 - Male
 - Female
2. What is the sex of your stalker?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Unknown
3. What relationship is the cyberstalker to you?
 - Stranger
 - Ex intimate (dated or in relationship)
 - Acquaintance
 - Colleague/ex colleague
 - Family member

- Neighbour
 - Unknown
 - other
4. Please tick boxes indicating the kind of behaviours used in cyberstalking
- Instant messaging
 - Emails sent to private accounts
 - Emails sent to work account
 - Social networking sites
 - Offline approaches
 - Contact with third parties
 - Wrote untrue things about you online
 - Wrote/posted pictures/videos of private things online
 - Created a website about you
 - Encouraged other people to contact you by posting your details online
 - Made threats to harm you (in any online medium)
 - Other
5. Which of these did you want help with when being stalked?
- Legal information
 - Advocacy with law enforcement professionals
 - Advocacy with Internet service providers or website hosts
 - Help changing phone number/email address
 - Emotional support
 - Liaising with colleagues/management at work to explain problems
 - Financial assistance for costs incurred (legal costs, moving costs etc)
 - Safety planning for myself
 - Safety planning for loved ones
 - Evidence gathering
 - Other

6. Did you seek support from your friends/family?

- Yes
- No

6a. If no, what was the main reason for this?

- I felt embarrassed
- I thought they would judge me
- I felt it was my fault
- I prefer to deal with things on my own
- I didn't want to worry them
- Other, please specify

7. Did you seek support from a GP/counsellor/medical professional?

- Yes
- No

7a. If no, what was the main reason for this?

- I didn't think they could do anything to help
- My health (emotional or physical) was not affected
- I was embarrassed
- I thought they would judge me
- I prefer to deal with things on my own
- Other, please specify

8. Did you seek civil legal assistance?

- Yes
- No

8a. If no, what was the main reason for this?

- It was too expensive
- I was worried about repercussions
- I didn't know this was an option
- I didn't think they would be able to help
- I was embarrassed
- I thought they would judge me
- I prefer to deal with things on my own
- Other, please specify

9. Did you report stalking to the police?

- Yes
- No

9a. If not, what was your main reason for this?

- I was worried about repercussions
- I didn't know this was an option
- I didn't think they would be able to help
- I was embarrassed
- I thought they would judge me
- I prefer to deal with things on my own
- Other, please specify

10. If you did report to the police, which of these statements best describes the primary reason that you decided to report the cyberstalking?

- I was scared my cyberstalker would physically harm me

- I was scared my cyberstalker would physically harm my loved ones
- I was feeling distressed by the cyberstalker's actions
- I was worried my cyberstalker would cause distress or worry to my loved ones
- The cyberstalker had threatened to make malicious allegations against me
- I was concerned about financial loss
- Other

11. If you were to (or did) report the matter to the police, what would be your preferred method of doing so?

- Telephone
- At the station
- Email
- Text
- Via a reporting website (for example see True Vision which deals with Hate Crime reports <http://report-it.org.uk/home>)

12. How would you prefer to receive support/information when being cyberstalked? Please rank from 1 – 8 with 1 being favoured and 8 being least favoured.

- Face to face
- Telephone
- Email
- Live chat
- Online forum
- Website
- Literature e.g. leaflets
- Text message